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George W. Truett



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GEORGE W. TRUETT

A B I O G R A P H Y

BY

POWHATAN W. JAMES

With an Introduction by

DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN

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TO ALL FAITHFUL MINISTERS
OF CHRIST JESUS

I N T R O D U C T I O N

IN THE CASE of Dr. George W. Truett, the notorious hazards that normally attend the writing of the biography of a living man are set at naught by a single fact. Midway his brief and modest sketch in *Who's Who in America* occurs a line that removes this book from the category of premature appraisals of men whose place in history is undetermined. The line reads simply: "Pastor at Waco, 1893-97, First Bapt. Ch., Dallas, since 1897." Any man who has held the same pastorate for forty-two years is an institution. He may be portrayed as such. With the confidence one feels in studying a structure that has survived the storms and the settling of centuries, the biographer can survey the foundations, can scrutinize all the chambers of the mind, and can proceed to describe the whole without any of the reservations that are necessary when the fate and the utility of the edifice are untested.

The foundations of Dr. Truett's life are family and faith. No eugenist will fail to be interested in what the author of this biography writes concerning the ancestry of Dr. Truett. Along with his direct inheritance of clean blood, he received collaterally a great tradition of preaching. Aside from the moving incident that Dr. James relates of the humiliation George Truett experienced after his first public testimony, he probably never had any doubt that he was born to carry on the labor of the men of his stock who had proclaimed the Word. He was spiritual *noblesse oblige*.

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Equally interesting, as Dr. James portrays it, is the story of George W. Truett's environment. He was born two years after Appomattox in a part of North Carolina closer to the bloody campaigns of the Army of Tennessee than to the struggles in the Sounds and on the Cape Fear. Knoxville is only sixty miles away. Chattanooga is equidistant. Atlanta is much nearer than Charlotte. Greenville, South Carolina, is a friendly neighbor. For the uprearing of a man who was to endure the post-bellum poverty of the South and, in the end, was most fully to exemplify the religious spirit of that region, there scarcely could have been a more fitting cradle than Clay County, North Carolina. The old evangelistic faith preserved there was made dynamic when young George Truett journeyed to Texas and entered Baylor University. Parsifal went West and found a wider horizon.

From the hour George Truett entered the ministry, it was manifest that he was a preacher, a positive preacher, as Dr. James is careful to point out in his appraisal. A multitude of those who have listened to Dr. Truett must have thought of him in the sacred words which his biographer applies to his ministry—*I know whom I have believed.*

It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of Dr. Truett's positive preaching on American ministers in a critical age. If some have paid Dr. Truett the sincerest of compliments by imitating him, there have been few who fell into the error of assuming that they could be equally effective by relying wholly on the vigorous assertion of mere dogma. His personality, his

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study and his eloquence have saved many a clergyman from assuming that positive preaching was synonymous with illogical affirmation. In his sermons, the man entire appears. Those who would profit by his preaching cannot escape the obvious lesson that they must seek the same deep source of spiritual strength, that they must find in life the material for their human appeal, that they must hold to like ideals of humble Christian service, and that, as far as they may, they must seek the same grace and force of utterance. These exacting requirements have not blinded any of Dr. Truett's disciples to the inspiring fact that the most effective of Southern ministers never compromises, never retreats and never takes the defensive.

If this has been the most important of Dr. Truett's many contributions to the clergy, his service to Christianity in America has been of kindred character. The most potent years of his ministry have been those of "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Few leaders of this generation have done more to dispel that fear, to restore faith in faith, and to make men, in Francis Thompson's phrase, "believe in belief." A day at the First Church in Dallas will restore any man's confidence in the vitality of the Christian religion. George Truett is the antidote for Alfred Rosenberg.

Of all this and of much that Dr. Powhatan James knows more intimately than does any other man, he writes delightfully in this volume. It is a biography that will retain its authority during Dr. Truett's lifetime and will prove indispensable to those who write,

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half a century hence, of one of the most notable figures of the twentieth-century church. Especially in the explanation of Dr. Truett's habits of study and of sermon-preparation, Dr. James supplies information that otherwise might not be preserved. It is a pleasure to introduce so admirable a life of a man to whom, along with millions of Americans, I owe a debt in spirit.

DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN

Westbourne,
Richmond, Virginia

P R E F A C E

THIS IS THE STORY of one of the most effective and best beloved preachers of modern times. Out of the rugged mountains of North Carolina he came and took deep root in the fertile soil of Texas where for fifty years he has wrought and grown until his influence for Christ girdles the globe. He has become the recognized spiritual leader of twelve million Baptists. And untold millions of other faiths, and of no faith, esteem him as a man of God who preaches and *lives* the gospel of Christ. His name has become a household word in many nations and he is a prophet upon whom untold honors have been bestowed in his own homeland. The world needs to know the story of George W. Truett. There is a moral and spiritual tonic in it for all—saints and sinners alike—who are able to recognize the transforming grace and power of God, manifested in a human life.

Because of Dr. Truett's inherent modesty, he most reluctantly consented to the preparation and publication of this volume. He has wondered if there were any point or propriety in his life-story being told on the printed page. But requests kept coming from many lands that a biography of him be written during his Presidency of the Baptist World Alliance and that it be published before the next session of that body which meets in Atlanta, Georgia, July, 1939. Finally he was persuaded that the insistent demand of his friends should be answered.

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The author consented to undertake this task only on condition that it be an "authorized" biography—authorized by Dr. Truett and his family and his church. This authority was given.

The preparation of this book has not been an easy task, though it has occasioned the author many joyous experiences. A spirit of cooperation has been manifested by a vast number of people, including Dr. Truett and his family, his secretaries and assistants, many Dallas citizens, and Christian leaders in America and other countries. Authors, editors and publishers have been especially gracious and generous in granting "permissions to print."

The writing of this volume has been a labor of love and it is now sent forth on its journey with the prayer that the lives of those who read it may be enriched and blessed by its story.

POWHATAN W. JAMES

PASTOR'S STUDY
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

September 27, 1938

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George W. Truett

Background

ON SUNDAY afternoon, May 16, 1920, a vast throng of more than fifteen thousand people assembled in front of the east steps of the Capitol in Washington. The heat was intense for such an early summer day, but the closely packed crowd sang lustily:

*"My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing."*

When the last notes of the national hymn had died away, a hush fell on the vast assemblage. They leaned forward expectantly as a tall, powerfully built man, in his middle years, modestly arose and began to speak. Although no amplifying system was used, his quiet voice rose on the air in accents so clear and words so simple that every listener could hear and understand. Skillfully, logically, the speaker approached and developed his theme. This man, whose graying hair gave a fine dignity to his features, had been deemed capable and worthy to voice the convictions and principles of his people as he spoke on the subject: *Baptists and Religious Liberty*.

For one hour and fifteen minutes this man, George W. Truett, held his vast, open-air audience spell-bound.

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No one was seen to leave, though most of the crowd had to stand. The audience seemed to sense that it was a dramatic and historic occasion. Even those who were hearing him for the first time quickly realized that they were listening to an orator of a high order and to an address of vital significance.

The Southern Baptist Convention had been in session for several days in Washington—a Convention so largely attended that there was no hall in the city large enough to seat the “messengers” and all the visitors who desired to hear the Dallas pastor speak. Added to his personal popularity, his subject had already been given considerable publicity by a local committee of Washington Baptists. Hence, to accommodate the tremendous crowd, this dramatic site was finally selected, with the Capitol as a background, the east steps as a pulpit and the dome of the Capitol as a sounding board. For many years incoming Presidents of the United States had delivered their inaugural addresses from this same spot. But the speaker this time was only the modest pastor of a great Baptist church in Texas, although a man deeply enshrined in the confidence and affection of one of America’s largest evangelical groups.

Every foot of space on the steps was occupied. There sat officials of the Southern Baptist Convention, United States senators and representatives, cabinet members, foreign ambassadors, army and navy officials, Supreme Court justices, editors, authors and leaders in every field. While standing on the plaza facing the Capitol were thousands of people representing many creeds and classes.

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The non-Baptist world may sometimes find it difficult to approve of Baptist principles, but that day in Washington George Truett stated certain of those principles and precepts with such frankness and sincerity and kindliness of spirit that no one could take exception even though some may have held to very different views. While he is a Baptist and adheres to the essential principles of his faith with the utmost personal loyalty, at the same time, he has always been distinguished for his fraternal and sincere Christian attitude toward all his fellow men.

Here are some revealing points made in that memorable address:

The right to private judgment is the crown jewel of humanity, and for any person or institution to dare to come between the soul and God is a blasphemous impertinence and a defamation of the crown-rights of the Son of God. . . . Every one must give an account of himself to God. Each one must repent for himself, and believe for himself, and be baptized for himself, and answer to God for himself, both in time and in eternity. There can be no sponsors or deputies or proxies in such vital matters. Let the state and the church, let the institution, however dear, and the person, however near, stand aside, and let the individual soul make its own direct and immediate response to God. One is our pontiff, and his name is Jesus. The undelegated sovereignty of Christ makes it forever impossible for His saving grace to be manipulated by any human system of mediation whatsoever. . . . That was a memorable hour in the Vatican Council, in 1870, when the dogma of papal infallibility was passed by a majority vote. You recall that in the midst of all the tenseness and tumult of that excited

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assemblage, Cardinal Manning stood on an elevated platform, and in the midst of that assemblage, and holding in his hand the paper just passed, declaring for the infallibility of the Pope, said: "Let all the world go to bits and we will reconstruct it on this paper." A Baptist smiles at such an announcement as that, but not in derision and scorn. Although the Baptist is the very antithesis of his Catholic neighbour in religious conceptions and contentions, yet the Baptist will whole-heartedly contend that his Catholic neighbour shall have his candles and incense and sanctus bell and rosary, and whatever else he wishes in the expression of his worship. A Baptist would rise at midnight to plead for absolute religious liberty for his Catholic neighbour, and for his Jewish neighbour, and for everybody else. But what is the answer of a Baptist to the contention made by the Catholic for papal infallibility? Holding aloft a little book, the name of which is the New Testament, and without any hesitation or doubt, the Baptist shouts his battle cry: "Let all the world go to bits and we will reconstruct it on the New Testament." . . . Every state church on the earth is a spiritual tyranny. The utterance of Jesus, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," is one of the most revolutionary and history-making utterances that ever fell from those lips divine. That utterance, once for all, marked the divorcement of church and state. It marked a new era for the creeds and deeds of men. It was the sunrise gun of a new day, the echoes of which are to go on and on until in every land, whether great or small, the doctrine shall have absolute supremacy everywhere of a free church in a free state.

These ringing sentences and many others like them leaped from the lips of the speaker and fell upon the

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ears and hearts of that audience in America's Capital, echoing around the world. For George W. Truett's address, *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, translated into many languages, has literally encircled the globe. It was given wide circulation all over Brazil in the Portuguese language and, according to the testimony of Baptists and other evangelical groups in that country, did much to win the fight for religious liberty on a national scale in Brazil. The ambassador from a certain European country whose government for centuries has been largely dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, sat on the steps a few feet from Dr. Truett and heard every word of his address on religious liberty. When it was finished this foreign diplomat was overheard to say: "I have never heard anything like this before. I am amazed by such teaching and such speaking."

Here was one who spoke with authority, and yet with such sincerity, frankness and friendliness withal, that those who were poles apart from him theologically could find only admiration toward him in their hearts. Many went away from that historic occasion asking, "Who is this man, George Truett?"

Every great life demands an examination of its background. Some of the explanations of George Truett's life and works may thus be found. Therefore we journey to those rugged highlands of Western North Carolina where the Truetts and the Kimseys had lived for generations and had become large and honorable clans, staunchly American, sturdy of physique and mostly Baptist.

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George Truett's mother was a Kimsey and on that side of his family tree were two notable preachers, James Kimsey, his grandfather, and Elijah Kimsey, a younger brother of James. From these two kinsmen he received a goodly preaching inheritance and tradition. He fell heir to his grandfather's golden voice, powerful frame and majestic mien. And from his great-uncle, "Lije" Kimsey, whom he had often heard while still a lad, came strong influences of evangelistic fervor and flaming zeal.

The Kimseys and the Truetts were of Scotch-Irish and English stock, as were the vast majority of the people who settled the Appalachian Mountain regions from Virginia southward. From Maryland, Virginia and eastern North Carolina they had migrated into the unoccupied mountain sections of the South and through succeeding generations had remained singularly pure in their Anglo-Saxon and Celtic strains.

James Kimsey, the maternal grandfather of George Truett, was born in 1803 and died in Towns County, Georgia, in 1870. When twenty-seven years of age he joined the Baptist Church at Franklin, Macon County, North Carolina, and was baptized in the Little Tennessee River by the Rev. H. Posey, pastor of the Franklin Church. He commenced preaching soon after and continued for forty years, until his death. He was pastor of numerous rural churches in North Carolina and Georgia and was much in demand for evangelistic meetings. In an old scrapbook, yellow with age, kept by one of his grandsons, Charles Spurgeon Truett, was found an article written in 1870 by one James Whit-

aker, Sr. Describing the death of James Kimsey, he wrote:

On Monday morning, the eleventh of April (1870) his condition showed plainly to the bystanders that he could not live long. This being suggested to him by a friend, he summoned all his remaining strength, and in the full possession of all the faculties of his mind, commenced exhorting the crowd of bystanders around his dying bed; and with but momentary intervals, continued his exhortations until Tuesday in the afternoon, when his breathing stopped and he sank down in death without a sigh or groan, remarking that *his work was done*.

Continuing the article, James Whitaker wrote:

He never took notes nor wrote even the skeleton of a sermon. All his discourses were delivered with feeling and force of argument, as well as Scripture—almost irresistible. And when he indulged in Exhortation, which he often did, he had no superior. His words were delivered with a force of feeling that must be felt by all hearers. . . . He was affable and kind in his intercourse with mankind generally. And in return he was beloved by all.

The above description of Rev. James Kimsey makes it clear that he had in pronounced degree some of the qualities which characterize his noted grandson, George W. Truett.

James Kimsey's younger brother, Elijah, was also a preacher whose fame had spread far and wide throughout the adjoining states of North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Dr. George W. Truett has often said that his great-uncle, Elijah Kimsey, was the most

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powerful and irresistible "exhorter" he had ever heard. And to illustrate the point he sometimes tells the story of the time "Uncle Lije" took charge of a Methodist camp-meeting which had been in progress for several days near Hayesville, North Carolina. This incident occurred long before George Truett was born, but it was related in his hearing so often by eye-witnesses that he tells it as vividly as though he had been present. He even reproduces the lisp and the quaint mannerisms of this Baptist kinsman of his, who startled and electrified that Methodist camp-meeting so long ago. The sun had not yet fully risen when "Uncle Lije" made his vehement request.

"Brethren, I have a requeth to make of you," lisped the stocky preacher. "You will think it a most unusual requeth for me, a Baptist preacher, to make of you Methodith preachers who are running thith camp-meeting."

"Well, brother Kimsey, what is your request? It must be very important since it brings you here so early in the morning, even before sunrise."

"Indeed, my brethren, it ith important," said Uncle Lije Kimsey. "I want you to let me preach. Thith camp-meeting has been going on for days and nobody is being thaved. Sinners all around here are loth and they are going to Hell unleth they repent and believe. Brethren, my thoul ith on fire. I have been praying all night. And I want to preach to these people."

"Brother Kimsey, *when* do you want to preach?" asked the several Methodist ministers.

"The thooner, the better, brethren. The fire is burn-

ing in my thoul," replied the preacher. His glowing eyes and importunate manner told the little group which had assembled in front of the Presiding Elder's tent that here was a man who was in deadly earnest.

"Brother Kimsey, as you know, we have four services daily, at eight and eleven in the morning, and at four and seven in the afternoon and evening. At which of these services do you wish to speak?" asked the manager of the camp-meeting.

"The thooner, the better," repeated Uncle Lije.

"All right, brother Kimsey, you may speak at the eight o'clock service this morning," was the generous concession of the Methodist preachers.

The ringing of the bell hung between two trees at the corner of the large wooden tabernacle sounded the summons for preaching services. Although it all happened eighty years ago, reports of that meeting are still current in western North Carolina and northern Georgia. Almost like a legend the story has been passed on from parents to children and grandchildren.

After a few brief explanatory words from the officials of the camp-meeting, the Reverend Elijah Kimsey was presented. He began—and no one ever seemed able to tell just when he stopped. He preached, he prayed, he testified, he exhorted, he witnessed, sometimes from the crude pulpit, sometimes down among the audience. He spoke to the whole throng at times; at other times he would converse or pray with some individual. Uncle Lije's zeal was contagious and the other preachers joined in the quest for souls. From the very first there was something electric about it. Soon all the people on

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the camp grounds came; others from near-by homes arrived. There were no telephones, but somehow word leaped across those mountains and sped down those valleys, even into adjoining counties. Multitudes came. A mighty work of God was in progress. Many began to testify, to pray and to sing. A spirit of witnessing came upon the people. Sinners cried out for pardon. They confessed their sins. Multitudes were converted that day and caused to rejoice in God through Christ. Hundreds and hundreds were converted before sunset; and far into the night the work went on. They did not stop for lunch nor for the evening meal. No one ever seemed able to say definitely just when that day's work came to a close. It may have been ten o'clock or midnight or later. They lost all track of time.

Even now, the people in that part of the country say that day marked the moral and spiritual rebirth of all that southwestern corner of North Carolina and north-eastern Georgia, and its influence swept over into Tennessee. And who can say that it stopped there!

Elijah Kimsey was an uncle of Mary Kimsey Truett, the mother of George Truett. Her son's boyhood days were spent in those blue hills of Carolina where preachers like Uncle Lije turned the people God-ward. George Truett can reproduce many of the curious mannerisms of delivery which characterized most of the mountain preachers of those days and which must have made their preaching a strange performance, judged by ears not accustomed to their style of public utterance.

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Few of those mountain preachers were trained in colleges or seminaries, but they were schooled in the Word of God and they managed to make heaven and hell, sin and repentance, faith and justification, the Saviour and salvation very vivid realities to their audiences. Their gospel was sharp and rugged like the mountains around them and their faith had in it the strength of the unchanging hills. To them the Bible was the Word of God, the only book with which most of them were familiar.

Frequently, the lad, George Truett, attended regular preaching services and evangelistic meetings conducted by his quaint and zealous kinsman. Deep and lasting impressions were made on the mind and heart of this thoughtful mountain youth by the preaching of this aging, though still fiery, "Uncle Lije." Part of the answer to the frequent question, "How account for the preaching power of George Truett?" is found in the influence of his great-uncle, Elijah, and of his grandfather, James. Both men made their contributions directly and indirectly to the lad, who in time came to be regarded as the outstanding preacher of his generation.

To go back a little, the advent of Truetts in America began with Levi Truett, great-grandfather of George Truett, who came into North Carolina from England as a young man and settled at Swannanoa in Buncombe County, about ten miles east of what is now Asheville, North Carolina. He married Susanna Morgan, whose parents came from Scotland and settled first in Maryland, and later in Buncombe County. Levi and Susanna

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Truett had eight children: James, Wesley, Jeremiah, Isaac, Levi, Sally, Polly and Susanna. James and Isaac, as young men, migrated to Texas in 1837. James became a congressman in the Republic of Texas, and from that day until now, his descendants have furnished many members of the legislatures of Texas.

The third child of Levi and Susanna Truett was Jeremiah, grandfather of George Truett. He married Mary Kyle, an attractive girl of Irish descent. Eight children were born of this marriage. One of them, James Madison Truett, moved to Indian Territory and became a Methodist preacher. A son of his is now (1938) Attorney General of Alaska.

Charles Levi, the fourth child of Jeremiah and Mary Truett, was the father of George W. Truett. Charles Levi Truett was born in Buncombe County on April 10, 1830. At twenty-one, he married Mary Rebecca Kimsey on May 22, 1851, in Cherokee County, North Carolina. To them were born eight children: William Thomas, James Lafayette, Sarah Caroline, Charles Spurgeon, Marion Lee, John Harvey, George Washington, Luther Jeremiah. When the children grew old enough to go to school Charles Truett moved his family from Cherokee County to a small farm near Hayesville, Clay County, North Carolina, where the educational advantages were better than in Cherokee.

Clay County was the center of the influence exerted by the Truetts and the Kimseys during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Originally, Clay was part of Cherokee and Macon Counties, but in 1859, it was constituted as a separate political unit with Hayesville as

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the county-seat. Clay County has many valuable mineral resources which have been mined with profit from time to time. There are numerous water-power sites in the county, some of which have been developed for milling and electrical purposes. But the chief income of the people is derived from their farms and forests.

Modern residents of Clay justly boast of all the physical features and products of their highland county. But the more thoughtful among them are much more proud of the men and women of light and leadership whom they have given to the world. For example, Hayesville Academy has on its list of alumni the names of many who have become prominent in the learned professions—lawyers, judges, physicians, teachers in public schools, high schools, colleges and universities, statesmen, journalists, ministers of the gospel, and missionaries to faraway lands. And many of those residents do not have one moment's hesitation in saying that of all the sons of Clay County who have gone forth to help the world, they rank most highly that ambassador for Christ, George W. Truett.

George Truett's youth was spent within sight of Tusquittee Bald Mountain. In Deep Gap on Yellow Mountain not far away are two springs about three hundred yards apart. The water from one flows east through the Tarurah River to the Atlantic Ocean. The water from the other spring flows west through Kimsey Creek and ultimately reaches the Gulf of Mexico. And, like these streams, human influences for good flowed forth from those Southern Highlands to bless the world with strength and beauty drawn from the hills. Well

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might the peoples of the plains join with the psalmist in saying: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

So powerful were the influences of the Pentecostal revival at the Hiawassee camp-meeting when Elijah Kimsey took charge, and so strong were the continuing influences of such preachers as H. Posey, James and Elijah Kimsey, Elisha Hedden, Alfred Corn, and, later on, of Fernando C. McConnell, that Clay County became one of the most orderly and law-abiding communities in the United States. For a long time it was necessary to have only two terms of the County Court during the year; one term of two days in the spring and another term of two days in the fall. The criminal record of Clay County, North Carolina, was said to have been the smallest in the nation for many, many years. This is truly a remarkable record in view of the fact that Clay was a remote mountain county, located in the heart of the Southern Highlands, a region formerly noted for lawlessness in general, and illicit whisky stills in particular.

A powerful influence for good in that section, when George Truett was a boy, was Hicksville Academy, later called Hayesville Academy. This school was founded, owned and operated by Professor John O. Hicks. It was located just outside the county-seat village of Hayesville, in Clay County. John Hicks was an able teacher, a strict disciplinarian, a good organizer, a man of forceful character, highly respected, and a citizen who exerted a noble influence on pupils and patrons from Clay and from several adjoining counties.

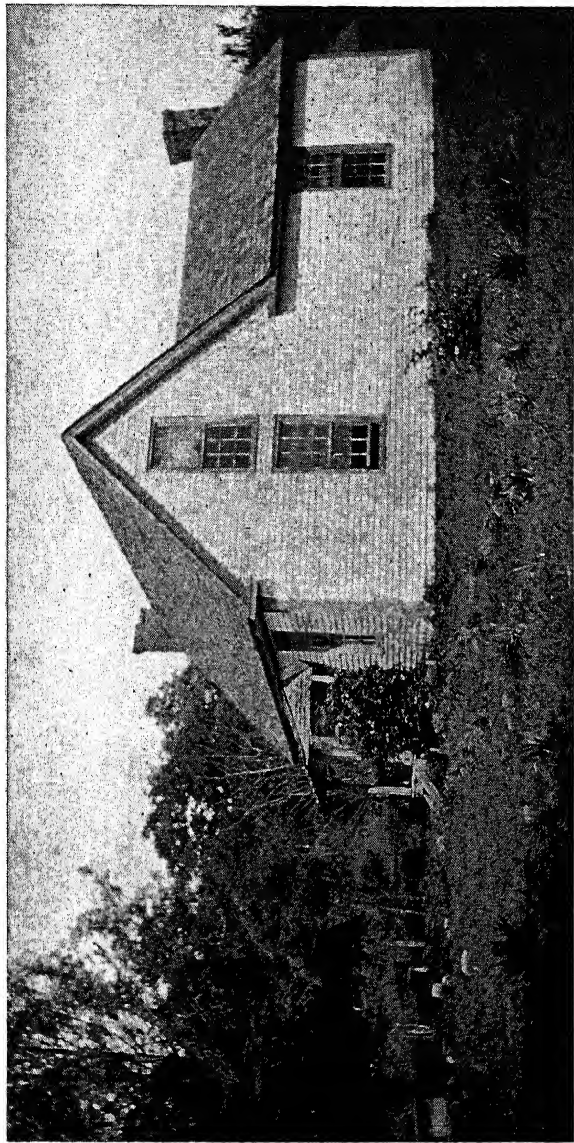


Photo by MacArthur, Oklahoma City.

Boyhood home of George Truett near Hayesville, North Carolina.
Now a Baptist shrine

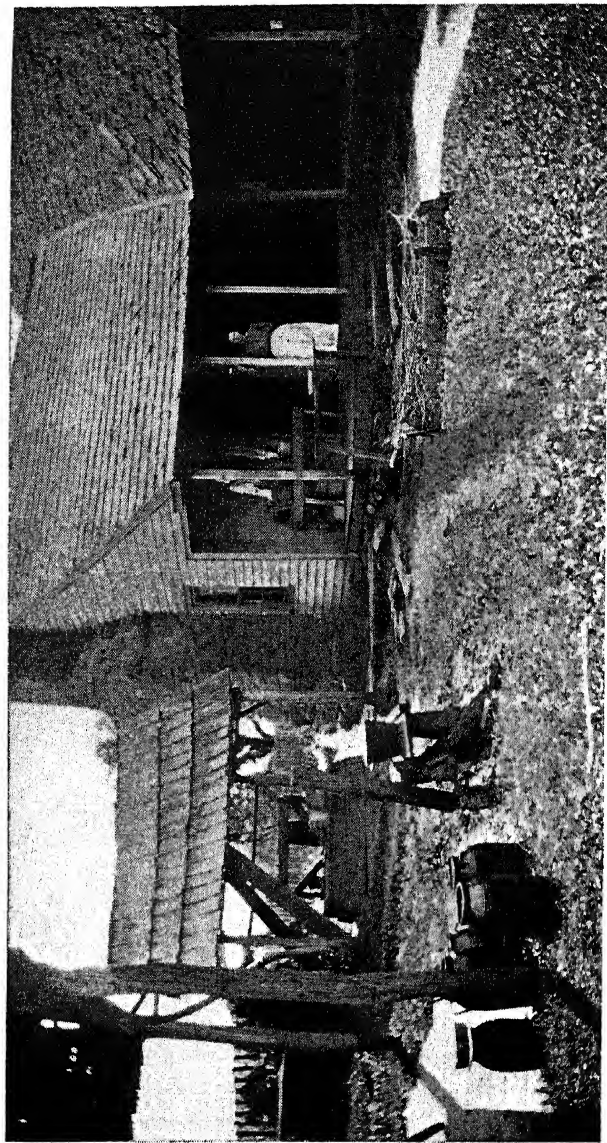


Photo by MacArthur, Oklahoma City.

Rear view of the Truett home

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The curriculum extended from the first grade through high school, and for many years the school provided the only educational facilities for hundreds of young people in that region. All the children of Charles Truett attended this school. Their farm home was about two miles west of Hayesville, and along the mountain road trekked twice daily these sturdy youngsters of the hills. George Truett attended Hayesville Academy for ten years from 1875 to 1885.

Subsequent events make it clear that George Truett had gained his ambitions for service at Hayesville Academy, since on completing his studies there, he promptly began to teach at the Crooked Creek public school, several miles away in Towns County, Georgia. He taught in that one-room school house for two three-month sessions.

The Truett farm, two miles west of Hayesville, consisted of about two hundred and fifty acres, less than half of which were under cultivation. The balance was rough mountain land, largely covered with timber. Often Charles Truett and his sons could be found in the woods splitting rails for the farm fences or cutting logs to be hauled to the saw-mill not far away. Corn, wheat, oats, rye, and hay were the crops raised in that rugged, upland county. Hogs, sheep, cattle, horses and mules formed their live stock.

The Truetts had more cattle than they could graze on their own farm so, like many of their neighbors, they turned their cattle loose on "the range" of Tusquittee Bald Mountain, several miles northeast of the farm. It was necessary every now and then to find those

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cattle in the mountains and salt them. On one occasion, the young lad, George Truett, and his father journeyed to Tusquittee Bald for this purpose. They had searched for their herd most of the day without success. The sun was getting low. Finally, Charles Truett said to his son, "George, you go down that cove and I'll go down the one on the other side of this ridge. I'll meet you at the foot of the ridge at sun-down. If you find the cattle give them all the salt you have." Whistling, the boy hurried down the cove, through the thick underbrush, past the towering trees and over the moss-covered rocks. He had gone perhaps a half mile when he suddenly came upon a huge rattle-snake not more than three feet ahead of him, coiled and ready to strike, its fifteen or more rattles sounding their deadly warning. Quick as a flash the boy leaped back, and when he was out of the range of the "strike," he seized a large rock and with perfect aim hurled it at the snake. Fortunately it crushed the reptile's head. Then the boy took to his heels down that mountain cove as fast as he could go. His father had found the cattle in the other cove and salted them. Near the foot of the ridge they stopped at the cabin of a mountaineer who told them that the upper part of the cove up which George had gone was literally alive with rattlers.

He said: "Boy, you were lucky to get out alive. Three years ago two of us killed seventy rattle-snakes up that hollow. We killed snakes until we were tired out. There is no telling how many rattlers are in that hollow."

The weary lad was glad to get on his pony and start for home with his father.

At first, Charles and Mary Truett had lived in a log cabin on their farm. Here, the younger children had been born. Later, they had built a very comfortable, though unpretentious, frame house in which the entire family had lived. Here on this mountain farm George Truett, the seventh child, was born on May 6, 1867.

This residence still stands. When the family migrated to Texas in 1889, it passed, with the farm, into other hands. But, in 1936, the Baptists of North Carolina purchased the house for the purpose of making it a Baptist shrine for their state. While it is true that Georgia first applauded him, that Texas first utilized him, and that the rest of the world has gradually recognized him, North Carolina yields first place to none in her pride in and her appreciation of her famed son, George Truett.

That modest home of Charles Truett and his family was much like many others in Clay County, North Carolina. There were long hours of unremitting toil on the rocky and none too rich farmland, labor that was not very productive of cash income. They never had much money. The father and the six sons did the farm work. The mother and the one daughter did most of the house work. But they were a healthy and sturdy lot.

The fourth child, Charles Spurgeon, was left totally deaf for life by scarlet fever when twelve years of age. He solved his problem by gradually learning lip-reading. The whole family was careful to make full

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and natural use of their lips in order that he might know what was going on around his restricted world.

His father taught him lip-reading and kept his pronunciation corrected. We were in the house several days before we knew that Spurgeon was deaf, because he was so proficient in translating our speech and in his pronunciation. In proof of this, we offer the following incident: At the Methodist church, they had an old-time *do re mi* singing school for a week. After singing for an hour they would have a recess, during which some of the students would play games and some would pair off for love-making.

One day a couple became more interested in each other than in their singing lessons, so during the singing hour they took a seat in the back of the church where no one could hear them. Spurgeon was sitting across the aisle where he could see their faces. When the next recess came, he called all the girls and boys together on the playground and repeated every word of the conversation. This almost broke up the singing school, because after that, when a young man started to say something sweet to his girl, he had to look all around to see if Spurgeon was in sight.¹

He never married, but made his home with his parents until their death. After this, Spurgeon lived with his younger brother, George, in Dallas.

It has often been suggested that the training George Truett received, even from childhood, in speaking for his deaf brother's benefit, accounts in part for his clear enunciation. His lips are made to perform their full functions of speech. There is never any mumbling or muting of words with him. He speaks out freely, openly, roundly, distinctly, whether speaking softly,

¹ Prof. Neal Kitchens, in *The Knoxville Journal*, August 1934.

or in trumpet tones calculated to call men to some heroic undertaking.

But, to turn back to that mountain home of Charles and Mary Rebecca Truett. We said it was much like other homes in that section. True, but there were certain important differences. The mother was a woman of great Christian faith and genuine piety. She impressed all who knew her as being a true "Mother in Israel." Her son, George, has been heard to say that many times in his boyhood he came upon her in some quiet retreat, pouring out her heart to God in fervent prayer for her family, with her face all bathed in the tears of supplication. Her husband did not join the church until in middle life. One of the most vivid impressions of George Truett's youth was seeing his father baptized in the Hiawassee River at about forty-five years of age. The religious background of Charles Truett was not as definite and positive as the religious background of Mary Kimsey had been from early childhood. Her father, James Kimsey, became a preacher the year she was born—and a preacher he was for forty years, up to the time of his death. No such influence had played on the childhood and youth of Charles Truett.

So, through many years, Mary Rebecca Truett prayed for the conversion of her husband and her children. For twenty-six long years she prayed before she had the great joy of seeing her beloved husband happily saved and subsequently baptized. And after that she continued to pray for the salvation of her children. She wanted them all in the Good Shepherd's fold. Nor did

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she pray in vain. She lived to see them all earnest, useful, faithful Christians.

But Mary Rebecca Truett did not limit her concern to the salvation of her own immediate family. Long years after she had left North Carolina, Dr. Lee R. Scarborough held an evangelistic meeting in her home church at Whitewright, Texas, and in his volume of sermons entitled *The Tears of Jesus* he says: "I was in a meeting in Texas years ago. One morning I said, 'I want every one of you who was led to Christ by someone in this audience to go shake hands with that one.' . . . I noticed that more than twenty people went to one simple, plainly dressed woman. . . . That woman was the mother of Dr. George Truett."

In spite of the fact that Charles Truett postponed his decision until so late in life, he was for years a secret disciple of Christ. He was a regular attendant at preaching services and insisted on the children being faithful in their attendance, even when neither he nor they were professed Christians. His own schooling was very limited, but he strongly believed in education and fully realized that, if his growing family were to get ahead in the world, then must they have the best educational and cultural advantages available.

Charles Truett also believed in the character forming value of good books and periodicals in a home where there were growing young people. In that mountain home were found such books as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Baxter's *Saints Everlasting*, Pendleton's *Christian Doctrines*, and Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, and such periodicals as *Youth's Companion*, *The Religious*

Herald (Virginia), *The Biblical Recorder* (North Carolina), *The Tennessee Baptist*, and *The Watchman-Examiner* (New York).

As a lad, George Truett devoured these books and read every word of the periodicals, so that even in his youth he had an acquaintance with such religious leaders as Jeremiah B. Jeter, John A. Broadus, James P. Boyce, J. B. Hawthorne, Moses D. Hogue, Charles H. Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, and other world-famous preachers of his time. He often read articles and sermons of these brilliant men as they appeared from time to time in the religious newspapers coming to the Truett home.

The face of George Truett has made a deep impression on people ever since he was a boy. Among the mountain neighbors he was known as "that big-faced boy of Charlie Truett." He has an open face, an Anglo-Saxon face, a balanced face with strength in every feature. It is a handsome face because it is so well proportioned. In repose, he is serious and even stern, but when his blue-gray eyes light up with laughter and his lips lift into a smile, his true character shows forth.

When one looks into the face of George Truett he thinks of the rugged strength of the mountains and the powerful current of a purposeful life, frequently softened and gladdened by the sunshine of radiant smiles. This mixture of seriousness and humor, solemnity and laughter, dignity and fun-making, was early manifested, even in the childhood of George Truett, and his family and intimate friends know how it has persisted all through his life.

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When George and his younger brother, Luther, were quite small a pet squirrel died and was buried by them. George delivered the funeral oration with such seriousness and pathos that Luther burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Luther," consolingly said the orator. "Don't cry, the little squirrel will rise again." And Luther was comforted enough to help fill the grave, set a stone at the head and place wild flowers on it.

His older brother, Rev. James L. Truett, tells us: "George was a clown among the young people of the community. He was a jolly youngster and could give and take a joke. Of all the young song leaders in Clay County, George was the chief, and he could get more music from the 'singing bee' on Sunday afternoon than anybody."

In George Truett's physical, social, moral, and religious background are found elements which partially explain the strong character and the striking career of this unusual man. But his experience of genuine conversion when nineteen years of age explains more about the man than all the other elements in his background. He owed much to his ancestors, his immediate family, his youthful associates, his teachers, and the preachers who came his way; he owed much to the uplifting mountains round about him; but readily would he admit that he is more indebted to the Christ whom he accepted and trusted and confessed as his own personal Saviour than to all the elements of heredity and environment combined. It is well, therefore, that the study of his background be concluded with the story of his conversion.

BACKGROUND

Concerning his conversion to Christ as his personal Saviour, let George Truett himself tell about this event in his own words:

I was converted in my nineteenth year, in the Baptist Country Church House, in Clay County, North Carolina, where I attended Sunday School and preaching services through all my childhood and boyhood years. A series of evangelistic meetings was being held in this church by the regular pastor, the Rev. J. G. Mashburn, who was aided by a young preacher, the Rev. J. G. Pulliam. The daily meetings were continued for some two weeks. Profound spiritual blessings attended the meetings, and a goodly number, young and old, were converted.

Such meetings were annually held in this country church house and from my earliest recollection I was deeply impressed by them. At the age of six, while listening to a sermon by an earnest country preacher there came to me a distinct and deep sense of my need of God's forgiving grace. Such consciousness was with me throughout the afternoon of that day and in the evening when I went to my bed for the night's sleep. Very vividly do I recall the longing that I had that night for some one to come to my bed, to tell me how I could get right with God, who was so great and good, about whom the preacher had taught me much that day.

As the succeeding years came and went, I was much impressed, again and again, by the sermons that I heard about Christ and his great salvation. At the age of eleven, in a series of meetings held in the church house already mentioned, I was again made very deeply conscious of my sins in the sight of God, and my need of his forgiveness. This consciousness was with me, again and again, through the years that followed, until the series of meetings in

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which I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour. In this last named series of meetings after the visiting preacher had spent a week, he preached what was supposed to be his farewell sermon, in that series of services, at the Sunday morning hour. He told the congregation that he was scheduled to be in another community at an early date, and must leave for such engagement. The regular pastor announced services for Sunday night. Imagine the surprise of the congregation, when they gathered for the evening service, to see the young preacher who had bade his good-bye at the morning service, come walking down the aisle to the pulpit.

He and the pastor had a brief, whispered conversation, after which the pastor explained to the people that the visiting preacher had returned under the deep sense of God's Will that the meetings should be continued for another week. The impression made by such announcement was immediately in evidence. A most solemn hush came upon the crowded congregation. The preacher took for his text that evening, "The Just shall live by faith: and if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

With remarkable earnestness, he set forth the simplicity of faith in Christ as our one and only adequate Saviour, and of the awful peril of continued trifling with the call of Christ to believe on him and follow him. When the preacher concluded his sermon, with the ringing challenge for immediate and unreserved acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour, a large number promptly went forward, publicly confessing Christ before all the people. I was glad to be in that number. I could "draw back" no longer from such public commitment and confession.

The next morning, I had to get up early to get my pony and go to my school several miles away, where I taught.

My mother was also up early to give me a hurried breakfast. She and I talked all the minutes at the breakfast table that morning about the supreme decision in my life the night before. While we thus talked, I told her about a soliloquy that I had just had with myself. Before getting up that morning I soliloquized with myself like this: "Last night you made a public profession of religion. Now, the neighbourhood knows about it, or will know about it, ere the day is done. What have you to say about your public profession of Christ, as your Saviour and Master, this morning?" And I put to myself this test: "What if Christ should now visibly come into this room, and put to you this question: 'Are you willing for me to have my way with your life, from this time on? I will not indicate to you what that way is to be—it is enough for you to know that my way is always right and safe and best. May I have your consent, without evasion or reservation, to have my way with you now and always?'" To such tests, I gave my unreserved "Yes," and a great peace filled my heart.

I told my mother fully about this test, that morning at the breakfast table, and we rejoiced together, with a great, deep joy, then I hurried away on my pony to my country school, intending to come back for the evening service, which I attended. At this evening service, the pastor did the unusual thing of extending the privilege of church membership at the opening of the service, rather than at the close. I accepted such privilege, and as per the custom of that church, I "told my Christian experience," to the assembled church, and was received as a candidate for baptism, and afterward to all the privileges of church membership.

Wednesday night of that week came, and to my utter amazement, the pastor, following the visiting preacher's

sermon, turned abruptly to me and said, "Brother George, won't you exhort these hesitating people to turn to Christ for his great salvation and service?" I was taken as much by surprise as I have ever been in my life, but with fearful trembling, I got up and gave my first public exhortation for Christ. As I spoke, I was fairly carried away with a passionate concern for the salvation of that congregation, every one of whom I knew, in that house crowded to the doors. I went down the aisle pleading with the people upon the right hand and the left. Then it suddenly dawned upon me, what a spectacle I must have made of myself, and in unspeakable humiliation I sat down. Very soon, I hurried out of the building and went down the country road as fast as I could walk, to my country home, and to my bed. After a little while Father and Mother came in, and Mother came looking for me, as only a mother would do. I told her that I felt humiliated and ashamed beyond human speech at what I had done in my miserable talk to the people that evening. And my mother gently kissed me and said, "My boy, all that is the temptation of Satan, to silence you as a witness for Christ." And then she added these words: "I doubt if ever in all your after life you will give a more effective testimony for Christ than you gave tonight." Oh, marvelous encouragement from my blessed Christian mother! And as I look back upon that first testimony that I gave for Christ, I doubt if in all my humble life I ever gave a more helpful testimony to the people. Men and women, throughout all that crowded throng, bowed themselves before God that night, and prayed for His forgiving mercy. From that hour on, wherever I went, godly men and women would call me aside and searchingly say to me: "Oughtn't you to give your life to the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ?"

Emergence

GEORGE TRUETT completed his studies at Hayesville Academy in the spring of 1885 at the age of eighteen. He had taken nearly all that was offered in this school under the tutelage of Professor John Hicks and his associate teachers and successors. He had read all the books in his home and such others as he could borrow from his friends. In school he had shown great proficiency in the language, literature and history courses, but he had never starred in mathematics as did Luther, his younger brother. Already he had manifested a mental alertness, a seriousness of purpose and a degree of trustworthiness which impressed his instructors, his family, and his friends. However, these admirable qualities in him were relieved of undue somberness by his fine sense of humor, his sociability, and his lively interest in people—all kinds of people.

He has never been a recluse nor a "book-worm." And yet, even from childhood, books have been made to yield up their treasures and their inspirations to him. He is one of the most widely-read men of his generation. He reads with astounding rapidity and with a photographic eye for that which is grist for his mill. But more will be said about George Truett and his

books in a subsequent chapter. It is enough to say here that the school boy was father to the man in his love of the printed page. Even as a lad in Hayesville Academy, he longed especially for knowledge concerning human beings and their reactions to life. Thus, biography early became one of his favorite fields of reading and has continued so through all the succeeding years.

With interests such as he had already shown in the Academy, what could be more natural than that he should turn to the school room as a teacher, at least for a while? Teaching would enable him to pass on to others some of the limited knowledge he had gained. Even at eighteen years of age, he was not lacking in a sense of stewardship concerning the privileges of learning. He had tasted of knowledge and found it good. Therefore, he would enter the school room to share with others what had seemed so good to him. But there were other reasons.

Teaching furnished an obvious opportunity for making some ready money for further schooling for himself. Even the small pay received in those days by a rural school teacher seemed princely to a farm boy who had never worked for wages and had always been dependent upon his parents for even meager "pocket-change." In those days, too, there was considerable distinction and influence attached to the office of school teacher in that section of the South. The teacher, the preacher and the judge were always held in the public esteem.

It was unusual for one so youthful to become a teacher, but George Truett, just out of high school,

was deemed worthy to be entrusted with the management of a one-room public school on Crooked Creek in Towns County, Georgia, just a few miles across the state line from his home in North Carolina. The school term lasted for only three months, during the late fall and winter. He had about fifty pupils ranging from seven to twenty years of age. He taught everything from the alphabet to history, geography, and first year algebra. Under such conditions, pupils can learn but little, though young teachers learn much and they learn it fast and thoroughly. The old one-room public school was a great institution for developing young teachers if it did not kill them before it developed them. The hours were long, though the term was short. The classes and the subjects were many. Discipline was a very real problem and often called for a stout heart, a strong arm, and summary methods. It was generally thought that discipline could not be maintained without the aid of a good hickory switch, used vigorously and frequently.

Some parents bitterly resented it when their offspring were given a thrashing by a teacher. But others took just the opposite view and held to the firm conviction that school children, boys especially, needed them now and then, just as they needed sassafras tea in the spring of the year, and calomel and quinine during the "dog days" of August. It was the custom of some teachers to "wade in" on the big boys early in the session in order to let the whole school know that they were masters of the entire situation.

Young Professor Truett did not find it necessary to

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administer corporal punishment to many of his pupils. But on one occasion when it became necessary, in his judgment, to thrash a certain unruly boy in the Crooked Creek School, the boy's father was enraged and threatened the teacher. At that time, George Truett was a mere stripling, weighing less than a hundred and fifty pounds, whereas the angry father was a large and powerful man. That fact, however, did not frighten the young teacher. He looked sternly at the man and said, "Mr. ———, I expect to do my duty as a teacher, and I am not afraid of you or any other living man on earth. My advice is that you go away now, think this whole matter over and you will see that I did the right thing and that you are now clearly in the wrong." The steady look in the young man's eyes and the fearlessness of his words and manner convinced the older man that the wise thing to do was to take the teacher's advice and go on about his own business and leave the running of the school to George Truett. In time, that mountaineer became one of the teacher's staunchest supporters.

It was while he was teaching in the Crooked Creek School that George Truett was converted in the fall of 1886, joined the Hayesville Baptist Church and conceived the idea of starting a private school at Hiawassee, Towns County, Georgia, which would serve that section somewhat as Professor John O. Hicks' school at Hayesville had served Clay County, North Carolina. Hiawassee was chosen as the location for the new school because it was near the center of the county's population, was fairly accessible over passable roads

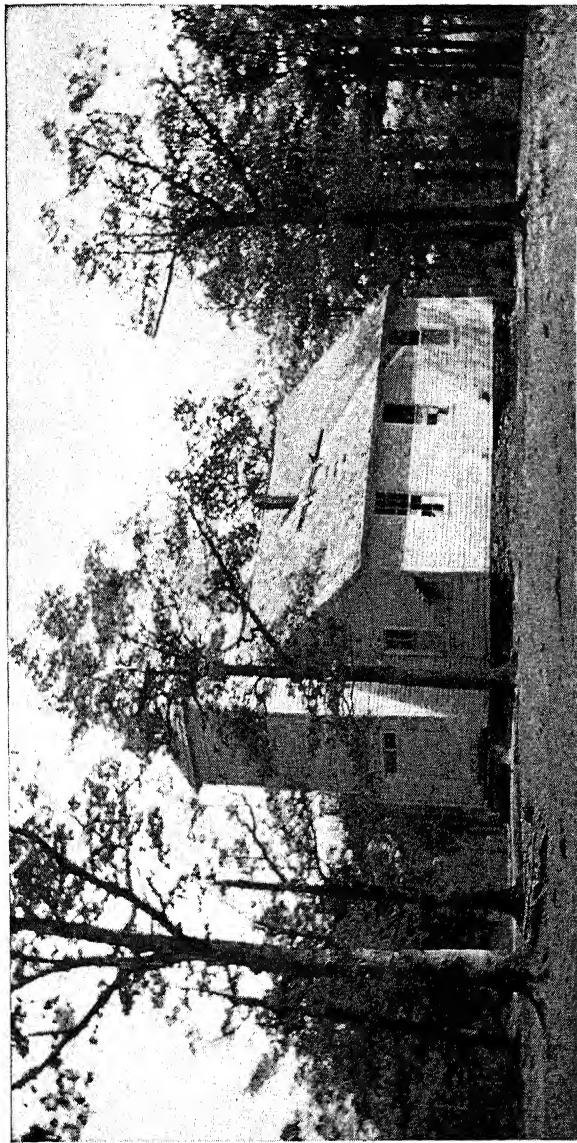


Photo by MacArthur, Oklahoma City.

Baptist church near Hayesville, where George Truett
was converted at nineteen

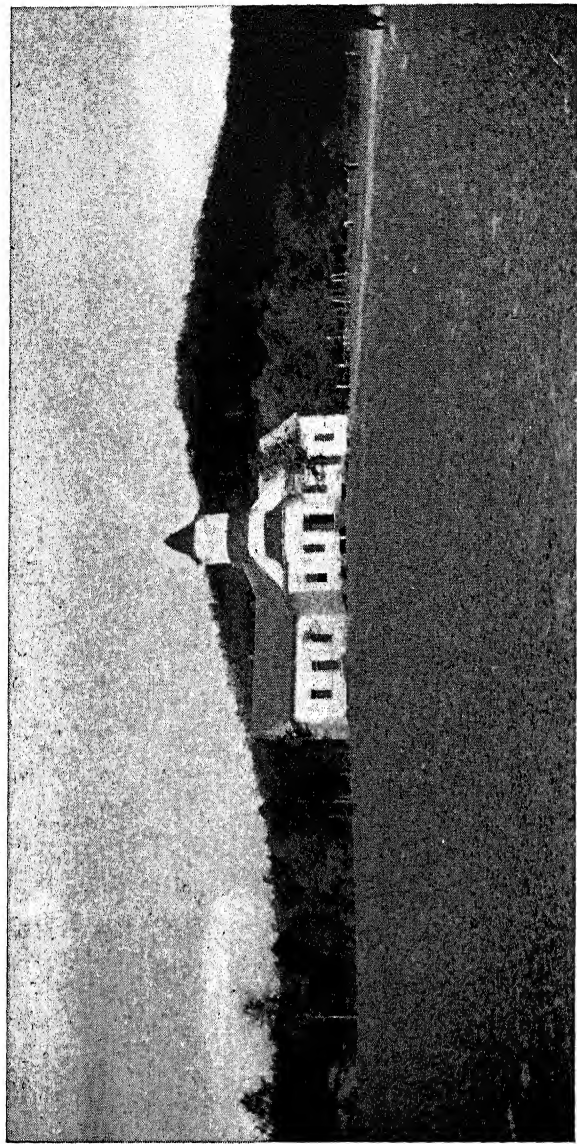


Photo by MacArthur, Oklahoma City.

Hiawasse Academy, founded by George Truett in Towns County,
Georgia, in 1887

and was the neighborhood in which lived George Truett's cousins, the McConnells. The McConnells were the most prosperous and influential people in that section and they did much to encourage their young relative from North Carolina to launch his private academy in their midst. He was especially aided and abetted in the enterprise by Fernando ("Ferd") C. McConnell, his preacher cousin, who was ten years his senior. These two young men were bound together by the powerful ties of blood, environment, calling, mutual admiration, and genuine affection. There was never any jealousy between them. Each rejoiced in the success of the other.

Fernando McConnell had attended Mercer University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, and was recognized even then as a very forceful young minister. He saw the need for a good school in Towns County and did much to encourage George Truett in the founding of Hiawassee Academy.

This school was begun in the court house in January 1887. It prospered from the first. A small tuition fee of one dollar a month, for all grades, was charged. If the pupils did not have the fee, they were credited by the teacher. Sooner or later practically all tuition fees were paid. No one who wanted to enter was denied admission. Classes continued to meet in the court house until an excellent frame school building was erected. George Truett was principal of the Hiawassee Academy from January, 1887, until June, 1889. Before he left it, the enrollment had grown to three hundred,

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which included twenty-three young preachers and fifty-one public school teachers who came to the Academy for further training.

There was an excellent religious atmosphere in the school. George Truett was a recent convert and, from the first, he manifested a lively interest in the spiritual as well as the cultural and academic progress of the students. Chapel exercises were held daily. A notable feature from the first was the Friday night prayer-meeting, which profoundly influenced for good the moral and spiritual tone of the whole school and the surrounding community as well. Even thus early George Truett began to show those characteristics which in time made him a truly great shepherd of souls.

It was during the Hiawassee days that young Truett won his first convert to Christ. Concerning this experience, in the after years, he spoke as follows:

I am fond of recalling the first soul it was ever given me to win to Jesus. I was a lad, barely grown, a young teacher, in the Blue Ridge Mountains. One morning, as we were ready for prayers in the chapel, there hobbled down the aisle to the front seat a lad, sixteen years of age; a strange, eager, lonely-looking lad. I read the Scriptures and prayed, and then sent the teachers to their classes. But my crippled lad stayed. I supposed that he was a beggar, and I thought, "Surely he deserves alms; his condition betokens his need." So I went to him at recess and said, "My lad, what do you want?" And he looked at me eagerly and said: "I want to go to school. Oh, sir, I want to be somebody in the world. I will always be a cripple; the doctors told me that. But," he said, "I want to be somebody."

He had won me. He told me of his poverty, and so he was given free tuition and books. How bright his mind! How eager to know he was! One day I called him into my office and said, "My boy, I want you to tell me more about yourself." And he told me that, some months before, his father had been killed in the great mill in an adjoining county, where he worked, and the few dollars he had saved up were soon gone. And then the people seemed to forget his mother's poverty and her need, and she said: "We will go to the next county, where they don't know us. Perhaps we can do better where we are not known." He said, "I want to help mother and be somebody in the world, and so I asked you to let me come to your school."

It was time, after a moment, for the great bell to ring for books. I laid my hand on the head of the little fellow and I said to him: "Jim, I am for you, my boy. You are my sort of boy. I believe in you thoroughly, and I want you to know that I love you." And when I said that last word, the little pinched face looked up into mine—almost a lightning flash—and he said: "Teacher, did you say you loved me? Did you say that?" I said: "Yes, Jim, I did." And then, with a great sob he said: "I didn't know anybody loved me but mother and the two little girls. Mr. Truett, if you love me, I will be a man yet by the help of God." And when, a few Friday nights after, I was leading the boys in their prayer meeting, as was my custom, I heard Jim's crutches rattle over there in the corner. I looked. He sat in a chair by himself to keep the boys off his worn and wasted limb, and getting up, sobbing and laughing at the same time, he looked across at me and said: "Teacher, I have found the Saviour, and that time you told me that you loved me started me toward Him."

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A laudable ambition for a college education and training for the legal profession was burning in the soul of George Truett during all the days of his principalship at Hiawassee. Echoes had reached him of the fine work being done at Carson-Newman College in Tennessee, Wake-Forest College in North Carolina, and Mercer University in Georgia. He dreamed of entering one of these colleges. Meanwhile he got hold of a copy of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, which he read with avidity. From time to time he attended famous civil and criminal trials in the county courts at Hayesville and Hiawassee and these whetted his ambition to become a lawyer. Apparently he had no idea whatever during those years that he would ever become a preacher or anything other than a lawyer. So it was quite natural that one so interested in things forensic should have sponsored the founding and development of a most vigorous literary society in the Hiawassee Academy—a society which featured debating. This society was ultimately named in honor of George Truett. A second society was later organized and named in honor of Y. W. Jones, a gifted teacher. The George W. Truett and the Y. W. Jones Literary Societies are still vigorous at Hiawassee.

The Academy was not many months old before it was evident that the faculty must be increased. Luther Truett, George's younger brother, was added to the faculty and specialized in teaching mathematics in which he had proved himself so proficient at Hayesville Academy. Before long, a Mercer graduate, Young W. Jones, was added to the faculty to teach some of the

more advanced classes. It was significant that his salary was provided conjointly by the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, a Board located in Atlanta, Georgia. This was an early expression of the Home Board's interest in mountain schools, an interest which grew through the years until the "Department of Mountain Schools" became one of the largest functions of the Home Board. At one time the Home Mission Board was sponsoring and financially helping no less than fifty mountain schools scattered throughout the Southern States. Hiawassee was one of the earliest and Y. W. Jones' salary was the beginning at Hiawassee. Only time will show the full value of the pioneer educational work done in these scores of mountain schools assisted by the Board until the local communities and states had become aroused sufficiently to take over their support by private subscription or by local taxation for high schools. In many communities throughout the highlands of the South, the impetus for educational advantages was supplied by these mission schools into which many thousands of dollars were poured by Southern Baptists during the generation following that beginning at Hiawassee, Georgia. In the providence of God, thousands of boys and girls throughout the Southern Highlands were given educational opportunities as a direct outgrowth of those modest beginnings under George Truett at Hiawassee.

The success of Hiawassee Academy under the leadership of its young principal was promptly recognized throughout all the region around, nor was it long be-

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fore reports of that success began to trickle down to Baptists all over the state of Georgia. But it was not until the spring of 1888, at the Baptist State Convention which met at Marietta, Georgia, that George Truett's star first blazed out with startling brilliance. The story of his emergence on that historic occasion has been told many times by speakers and writers. Indeed, his first impromptu speech before the Georgia Baptist Convention is regarded as an epic of the mountains and a turning point in the history of Christian education for the underprivileged youth of the Southern Highlands.

Such large crowds from all over the state had come to the Georgia Convention that the Baptist church at Marietta could not hold them, and so the meetings were held in the large county court house. The report on Christian Education had been read and was under discussion. Rev. Fernando C. McConnell was speaking on Mercer University and the influence it was exerting even in the remote mountain sections of the state. One of Mercer's graduates, Y. W. Jones, had gone to Hiawassee Academy and was doing a notable work there. Other Mercer men were holding aloft Mercer's torch in the churches and schools of North Georgia. The speaker grew eloquent as he pleaded the cause of the mountain boys and girls whom he knew so well, for he had grown up among them. He was testifying to their native ability, saying that they were like rich ore awaiting the miner's pick and shovel. He paused a moment and then said: "Brethren, if you don't believe me I'll show you. There is a lad at this Convention from up there in the mountains who ought to go to Mercer."

He then called, "George, come up here! George, where are you?" He scanned the audience but George was nowhere in sight. He then said, "Brethren, I do believe in my soul, the boy has got scared and run off."

Just then someone near the door said, "Here he is," and a pale, slender young man was pushed down the aisle and led up on to the platform, manifestly embarrassed as all eyes were turned upon him.

"Brethren," said Ferd McConnell, "this is George Truett. He can speak like Spurgeon. George, tell them what the Lord has done for you, and what you are trying to do up in the mountains."

For a few seconds George Truett stood there utterly abashed and speechless. Years later, when questioned about his emotions as he faced his first big audience, he said: "I didn't know what I could say that would interest all those big preachers and other leaders from the cities. Then I thought of a boy back home who was desperately hungry for schooling, a lad who had recently poured out himself in confession to me. And I forgot myself, forgot the mistakes I might make, and just cut loose and told them about that boy, and about others like him, and about the work we were trying to do at Hiawassee."

He began to speak to them: "Ladies and gentlemen, I never saw such a great, big, fine looking body of people as this one is. The truth is, I am so scared that my knees are making war on each other and I hardly know which one of my father's sons I am."

By this time he had found his voice, that same voice which has thrilled millions. Continuing, he said: "I have

been impressed as this discussion on education has proceeded that the people of this Convention do not seem to realize what they have in Mercer University. They have not been with me up in the mountains; they have not seen the gleams of Mercer's light gilding the mountain tops and lighting up the valleys; they have not seen the mountain boys who are catching its radiance in their hearts, and they have not seen the homes that have been blessed, the churches that have been quickened, the lives that have been inspired and transformed by Mercer's marvelous influence."

The remarkable cadence of the young man's voice, his happy choice of words, and his kindling eyes gripped and fascinated the great audience. There was the hush of rapt attention. But glances were exchanged between the brethren which wordlessly asked, "Who in the world is this boy? Where did he learn to speak? Why have we not known of him before?"

Having paid his glowing tribute to Mercer, he quickly shifted to a simple recital of what was being attempted at Hiawassee for the eager, responsive and capable young people of the mountains. He told of their hunger and thirst for an education, of their sacrifices, and of their responsiveness to every opportunity offered them. He told in brief words of this one and that one whose stories he knew so well, because the story of their struggles and their yearnings was the same as his own. Did ever Youth or Christian education have a more eloquent advocate! He was the incarnation of the very thing he was pleading for. Every person present in that court house that day was able to visualize

the aspiring youth of the mountains because here was one of them speaking with all the spontaneity and refreshing naturalness and clearness of the mountain folk. It was no plea of poverty. It was no whining, sniveling tale. It was the challenge of a just cause, it was the uncovering of a rich vein of gold, it was pulling aside the curtain that the audience might glimpse the souls of those who longed for learning.

As this lean young mountaineer, just out of his teens, forgot himself in remembering others whom he loved, the surprise of the audience gave way to pleasure, pleasure made room for wonder, wonder changed into quickened heart-beats. These Georgia Baptists were being made acutely aware of their obligation in the multitude of virile young Americans in the mountain counties across North Georgia. And many of them seemed to sense the fact that they were witnessing the emergence of a remarkable young man who really could "speak like Spurgeon," as F. C. McConnell had said. From that day to this, people who attended the session of the Georgia Baptist Convention take delight in telling of the sensation which was caused by George Truett's first speech. The response was instantaneous. The Convention was electrified. "Men wept under the mastery of that mountain lad's epic story. Pocketbooks were opened, financial support was given, and more was pledged." The future of Hiawassee Academy, and many another mountain school, was assured from that day on.

Dr. J. B. Hawthorne, then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, one of the greatest pulpit orators

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of the nation, was present and was a fascinated listener to George Truett's maiden speech. Concerning it he said: "I have heard Henry W. Grady, the South's most brilliant editor and orator. I have heard Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks and others of the world's famous speakers, but never in all my life has my soul been more deeply stirred by any speaker than it was that day at Marietta by that boy out of the mountains. My heart burned within me and I could not keep back the tears."

Mr. C. B. Willingham, a wealthy layman, sprang to his feet and said: "I'll give to his school, but I want to do more than that. I want the privilege of sending George Truett to college. If he will come to Mercer University, I'll pay his expenses till he graduates."

No one was more surprised than George Truett at the response his speech called forth. The magnificent proposal from Mr. Willingham almost stunned him. For years he had dreamed of the time when he could save up enough to go to college, even for one year. But here was an offer, a genuine and public offer, of what, at that time, must have seemed like a fortune to him. But it was not to be.

George Truett never entered Mercer as a student. In the summer of 1889 he followed his parents to Whitewright, Texas, where they had migrated early that year. Two of the older boys, Tom and Harvey, had moved to Texas even earlier and had written home glowing accounts of that land; Father Truett decided to sell his none-too-profitable farm near Hayesville,

and move the family to the plains of the Southwest, to give his sons a larger field of opportunity, as so many others were doing in those years. James Truett was teaching school in Tennessee. George and Luther were left behind, teaching in Hiawassee Academy. Such alluring letters reached them from Texas that, by the end of the school session, in the late spring of 1889, George and Luther decided it was best for them to "go west." The Academy was firmly established. Tom W. O'Kelley, a brilliant young man, was available as principal and became George Truett's successor at Hiawassee.

Humanly speaking, it must have seemed quite foolish to some that George Truett should turn away from the immediate opportunity offered him for a full four years' course at Mercer with all expenses paid by a generous benefactor. But evidently God's leadership was in that decision to go to Texas. Mysterious are the ways of the Lord, his wonders to perform. The sale of the North Carolina farm, the trek of the family to Texas, the enticing letters from those who had gone on ahead, the strong family ties among the Truetts, were some of the factors He used to bring the chosen vessel to the place where He wished him to be.

And so the lad from the mountain farm of Clay County had emerged as a successful teacher and executive of a school, as a winner of souls, though still a layman, and as a gifted speaker who could fire the imagination and the hearts of men. But best of all, he had emerged as a young man so willing to sacrifice

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present advantages for the sake of unseen gains in an untried land where opportunities were said to be many and great. The call of "Westward Ho!" had laid hold upon him. Though he knew it not, the youth of the hills was on his destined way to become the prophet of the plains.

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IT WAS no easy decision for George and Luther Truett to leave the successful work which they were doing at Hiawassee Academy in the mountains of North Georgia and start for the uncertainties of White-wright in North Texas. It was a venture of faith on their part, even as it had been on the part of their parents. If their father and mother, then past middle life, had enough daring to go forth from the home in the hills to the making of a new home on the plains, surely the youngest boys in the family, though well established in their school work, should likewise dare to take a chance and fare them forth on a venture to a new and larger land of virgin opportunities. Thus reasoned George Truett, though it caused him much pain to leave his devoted pupils and his beloved mountains. The family in Texas never knew what a struggle it cost George and Luther to follow their trail to Texas.

They arrived during the hot summer season and at once went to work on the farm. The heat and the flatness of the country and the brackishness of the water, after the coolness of the highlands and the softness of the springs and wells in the mountains, seemed very terrible to the two young teachers and made them acutely homesick.

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After only a few days of it, Luther said, "George, this is awful. I don't believe I can stand it much longer. If I had known what we were getting into here, I would have stayed in the mountains." And George, in effect, said, "Amen, brother. You said it."

Although George Truett eventually learned to love the wide sweep of the plains and prairies and the wide-open spaces of Texas, he has never entirely recovered from his longing for the sapphire heights of the Blue Ridge Mountains. That is one reason why he goes back almost every summer for a week of preaching at the Ridgecrest Assembly in North Carolina, and follows it with a week at the summer home of his daughter, Mrs. Thomas W. Gilliam, near Lynchburg, Virginia. The western porch of this lovely house looks out across the Campbell County valley to the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Dr. Truett sits on that porch for many long hours gazing at the soft-toned mountains, speaking never a word, refreshing his soul with things and thoughts unknown to those whose youth has not been spent under the spell of such towering loveliness.

But Texas, also, has her charms. She, too, can cast a spell upon the spirits of men. As the summer heat gave way to the freshness of fall and the rich fields yielded their abundant harvests; as Grayson College at White-wright opened its doors to old and new students and the two young teachers, George and Luther, entered as pupils in September, they quickly found themselves feeling more at home. Grayson was a Junior College, noted for its strict discipline, its thoroughness in work

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and the excellence of its academic standards. On its faculty were several able and scholarly teachers. George Truett began the study of Greek and Latin and found them to be most congenial pursuits. He made rapid progress in these two ancient languages, as well as in history, English literature, theme writing, and public speaking. He never starred in mathematics, though he always made passing grades.

The literary societies in Grayson College furnished him an excellent forum for public speaking. He quickly made a name for himself in the debates and other activities of these societies.

The Baptist Church and Sunday school at White-wright soon discovered the teaching and speaking talents of the serious-minded and yet congenial young man who had joined their church. It was not long before they elected him as the superintendent of the Sunday school, and on several occasions when the pastor of the church was absent, young Truett was asked to speak to the congregation at the hour of public worship. He was not then a preacher, nor even a ministerial student, but was hoping to become a lawyer. As a matter of fact, he had his mind wholly set on becoming a lawyer, and for several years had continued to read all the law books he could get his hands on. However, he felt it a pleasant duty for every Christian to do his share when occasion offered. Hence he accepted the superintendency of the Sunday school and spoke before the church when called on to do so. But in those days, he would not take his stand on the platform behind the pulpit desk. He felt that that sacred

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spot should be reserved for God's ordained ministers and for them alone. Accordingly, he always stood down in front of the pulpit whenever he was invited by the church to substitute for the pastor at any of the stated services of the church. Long before George Truett became a preacher, he entertained an exalted conception of the dignity, the sacredness and the high honor of the office of pastor and preacher.

The three Truett, Harvey, George and Luther, quickly made their impression on Whitewright, the college, the church and the community generally. They brought with them the freshness, the vigor and strength of the mountains. Instantly they responded to every cultural and social influence for good.

Because of his gift for public speech, his native geniality, his vein of humor, and his inherent qualities of leadership, George, within the course of a few months, was ungrudgingly accorded general recognition in Whitewright and Grayson County. Before the first year had passed it appears that many in the Whitewright community sensed that a most unusual young man had come into their midst. It is possible, though not probable, that echoes of his notable achievements in Georgia and North Carolina had reached them and had paved the way for the early recognition of his worth and of his talents in the new community. The greater probability is that such a natural ability could not long be hidden in his new environment. While it is true that from the time of his eastern emergence among Georgia Baptists at Marietta and his western debut among Texas Baptists in "The Baylor Campaign,"

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George Truett has nearly always had the advantage of unsought-for publicity, it is also true that he has ever made his own way and more than justified all expectations. The people at Whitewright quickly took him to their hearts, not because of what he might have been or done "back East," but because of qualities he manifested in their midst.

Gradually the conviction grew upon the members of the little Baptist Church that George Truett ought to be a preacher. They discovered in him physical, mental, moral and spiritual qualities which, in their judgment, were essential elements for that profession. Within a year after he had come among them their conviction grew so positive that they took an unusual step. Often individuals and groups had privately discussed the matter among themselves. Some of them had talked with young Truett and told him they thought he ought to become a preacher; but he had always replied that his ambition was to be a lawyer. Finally, the leaders in the local church decided that the time had come to take definite and concerted action about the matter. On more than one public occasion George Truett has told of the unusual procedure of the Whitewright Church. Let him tell it again:

From the time of my conversion on, everywhere I went, godly men and women would pluck me aside and say, "Oughtn't you to be preaching?"

I was ambitious to be a lawyer from my earliest recollection; and therefore had that big battle to fight. All my plans pointed toward the calling of the lawyer. And with

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me, it was a great battle to yield that. I was perfectly willing to talk for Christ, but not from a pulpit.

I went West—to Texas, where father and the rest of the family had gone. Very soon I was chosen to be superintendent of the Baptist Sunday School at Whitewright, Texas. I often conducted services, making it a point always to stand out in front of the pulpit, feeling myself utterly unfit to be in a pulpit. I was still ambitious to be a lawyer.

We had there, in the village church, the old Saturday meeting. On a certain Saturday in 1890, the attendance was enormous. I thought within myself, "This is singular: here is a house full of people on Saturday."

And when they got through with all the rest of the church conference, at the close of the minister's sermon, the oldest deacon, then quite frail in health, rose up and began to talk deliberately and very solemnly. I thought, "What a remarkable talk he is making—perhaps he thinks it is his last talk." Presently, I became disturbed by it. He said to the church in conference:

"There is such a thing as a church duty when the whole church must act. There is such a thing as an individual duty, when the individual, detached from every other individual, must face duty for himself; but it is my deep conviction, as it is yours—for we have talked much one with another—that this church has a church duty to perform, and that we have waited late and long to get about it. I move, therefore, that this church call a presbytery to ordain Brother George W. Truett to the full work of the gospel ministry."

It was promptly seconded and I immediately got the floor and implored them to desist. I said, "You have me appalled; you simply have me appalled!" And then one

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after another talked, and the tears ran down their cheeks and they said, "Brother George, we have a deep conviction that you ought to be preaching." Again I appealed to them and said, "Wait six months, wait six months!" And they said, "We won't wait six hours. We are called to do this thing now and we are going ahead with it. We are moved by a deep conviction that it is the will of God. We dare not wait. We must follow our convictions."

There I was, against a whole church, against a church profoundly moved. There was not a dry eye in the house—one of the supremely solemn hours in a church's life. I was thrown into the stream, and just had to swim.

After the motion had been carried unanimously, certain preachers (including Rev. J. G. Mashburn, who had baptized George Truett back at Hayesville, N. C., and was at this time visiting the Truetts in White-wright) were requested to convene the next morning to examine young Truett before the eleven o'clock service at which time they proposed to ordain him. They then adjourned.

Continuing his account, Dr. Truett later said:

I had a talk that afternoon with my mother, an unforgettable talk, and she said:

"Son, these are praying people. These are God's people. And you saw how they felt. They felt that they couldn't—even in the face of your plea, your protest, your exhortation to delay—they couldn't delay. It was a whole church in solemn conference assembled."

Well, I didn't sleep much that night, and the next morn-

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ing I was examined before the whole church. I told the story of my conversion, and some of God's strange leadings in my life. I told them of my ambitions, but that I was now willing to yield without debate or further delay to the will of God; that I was entirely submissive to His plan in life for me, even though it should be the humblest little spot in all the world. And that day one of the worst men in the community was gloriously converted under the influence of that holy service at which I was examined and ordained.

I hasten to add that if I had a thousand lives given me, and the Master should say, "You wanted the first one to be a lawyer, but I wanted your first life to be that of a preacher; now you may make your own choice," I would not hesitate one moment to give the whole thousand lives to Christ and His glorious gospel ministry.

Rev. Charles H. Dickey of North Carolina, upon hearing this testimony of Dr. Truett, said:

"It seems most evident that at this point, Dr. Truett had in mind Samuel Stennett's great hymn:

*To Him I owe my life and breath,
And all the joys I have;
He makes me triumph over death,
He saves me from the grave.*

*Since from His bounty I receive,
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be thine."*

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Since that Saturday and Sunday in Whitewright, Texas, when the little church called George Truett into the gospel ministry and ordained him, millions of people have been quite convinced that the church made no mistake, that God called his servant through the voice of his people, that it was a clear case of *vox populi, vox Dei*. However, it was of even greater importance that the young preacher himself should be absolutely convinced that his call to preach came from God through the people. He has never doubted that his calling was of the Lord. And surely no preacher has ever felt clearer or more abundant or more convincing proofs that his was a divine call to preach.

That Saturday night he had walked the fields of his father's farm, fighting a fierce inner battle. Before the night had passed, the young man's mind and heart surrendered. He felt that God wanted him to preach the glorious gospel of his more glorious Son. He did not know, he could not even have dreamed of the wonders the Lord would perform through him—that within a few weeks he would be called upon to raise the crushing debt upon a university; that he would be graduated from this university and be offered its presidency; that he would be the pastor of one of the greatest churches for more than a generation; that he would be regarded as the outstanding leader of his church in Texas, the South, the nation, the world, and be widely recognized as one of the most effective preachers of his century.

He preached his first sermon in the First Baptist Church of Sherman, Texas. Unfortunately, no transcript of that sermon exists.

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Dr. J. B. Cranfill had been financial agent for Baylor University from November, 1888, to November, 1889, at which time he was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Texas Baptist Convention to succeed Dr. A. J. Holt. The University was burdened with a crippling debt of \$92,000. This may not seem a great debt in these days, but in 1890 it was like a great millstone about the neck of Baylor. The messengers went home from the Waxahachie Convention in '89 feeling greatly burdened by Baylor's debt and the other heavy obligations upon the Convention enterprises. Dr. B. H. Carroll was specially commissioned to find a new financial agent for Baylor. And many of the brethren agreed to pray that God would lead Dr. Carroll and the trustees to the right man to lead in a campaign to free Baylor from its burden. Rev. R. F. Jenkins, pastor of the Whitewright Baptist Church, was one of those who kept the covenant and prayed frequently and earnestly. As he prayed, again and again the face of the recently ordained young preacher, who was a member of his church, came before his mind's eye. The impression grew upon him that George Truett could raise the needed funds, in spite of the fact that he was only twenty-three years of age, that he was practically unknown to Texas Baptists, and still a student in Grayson Junior College. Finally, Pastor Jenkins wrote Dr. Carroll about his impressions. In his letter he said:

"There is one thing I do know about George W. Truett—wherever he speaks, the people do what he asks them to do."

Altogether it must have been a very remarkable

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letter, because almost immediately Dr. Carroll wrote to young Truett asking for a conference with him.

That was in the late fall of 1890. He made an appointment with the young man to meet him at a missionary conference in McKinney where Dr. Carroll was scheduled to speak. George Truett went to the conference, heard Dr. Carroll speak, and at the close of the address introduced himself to the great leader of Texas Baptists. That was the beginning of a deep friendship between these two remarkable men, one of them forty-eight years of age, the other twenty-three.

Dr. Carroll said: "Brother Truett, you are to go with me to Mr. Crouch's home. We have a room together there and can talk at length about a very important matter." This they did most thoroughly for several days. Dr. Carroll recited to him the epic story of Baylor University's founding, development, struggles and influence in Texas. Dr. Carroll, like all other Baptists in Texas, loved Baylor. It was their pride and joy. It was the first school of higher learning founded in the state and it has flourished until this day.

Baylor was founded, in 1845, at Independence, Texas, under a charter granted by the Republic of Texas. In 1886, Baylor University and Waco University were united, under the name of Baylor University, but located at Waco. The only justification for its being called a university at that time was the faith and the ambition of those in charge of it. Subsequently it took on proportions which thoroughly justified its name.

It developed an excellent Law School and a Depart-

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ment of Bible which eventually became the Southwestern Theological Seminary, located at Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. B. H. Carroll, who had been dean of the Department of Bible at Waco, founded the Seminary at Fort Worth and became its first President. In 1903, Baylor University organized a College of Medicine and Pharmacy located at Dallas, in conjunction with the great Baptist Hospital in that city. In 1918 a College of Dentistry was organized and became a component part of the great Baylor Medical center group in Dallas. Since then, an extensive expansion program has taken place at Baylor in Waco. In 1935 there was a faculty there of eighty-nine and a student body of 2,387. The Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry and the Hospital have the highest national rating.

As the younger man heard the older man speak, as only B. H. Carroll could, on the past, present and future of this school, his heart began to warm within him. He found himself becoming deeply interested as Carroll talked and as he pressed upon him the idea that he should take hold of the difficult task of going afield to secure funds to relieve the University of her crushing debt.

The outcome of that protracted interview was that George Truett consented to take the matter under prayerful consideration and make final answer as soon as possible. Then he returned to Whitewright.

When he walked into his mother's home she said: "Son, what in the world is the matter? Have you seen a ghost? Are you ill?"

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He said: "Mother, make me a pallet here in front of the fire. I feel ill."

He quickly broke out with a severe case of measles and was quite sick for several weeks. His family and friends became alarmed about him, so serious was his condition. But it was not George Truett's time to die. God had other and far-reaching plans for him. However, it was a time for him to do a lot of heart-searching and some intensely serious thinking.

He debated seriously as to the wisdom of his becoming the financial agent of a school now that he had been called and ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry. Was raising money for a Baptist College a legitimate part of "the full work of the gospel ministry"? Assuming that he could be successful, ought he to do it? He was now but twenty-three years of age and only a student in a Junior College. Ought he not to devote himself to his college courses and prepare himself for some good theological seminary? Surely, he thought, every young preacher should get all the schooling possible, as soon as possible, in order that he might begin his paramount task of preaching to a world of lost and dying men. While it was true that his grandfather, James Kimsey, and his great-uncle, Elijah Kimsey, had been great preachers without having gone to college or a seminary, it never occurred to him that it would be right for him deliberately to omit getting a thorough education as a preparation for the ministry. Would he be turning aside from the main business of his life if he, even temporarily, became Baylor's finan-

cial agent? These were, indeed, serious questions for the young man to face. He confronted them on his knees. He waited before the Lord until he felt that he had his answer.

It was nearly two months before he notified Dr. Carroll that he would shortly come to Waco for a conference with him and the board of trustees of Baylor. When finally he set out by train for Waco, every turn of the car wheels was accompanied by a prayer that God would intervene in some way and not let him reach his destination, if He did not want him to do the work of financial agent for Baylor. But he reached Waco on schedule, found his way out past the buildings of the University, and went directly to Dr. Carroll's home where he was received most graciously.

Soon the trustees were assembled and Dr. Carroll, having introduced his young prospect to them, gave a brief talk about the circumstances which led up to his inviting "young brother Truett" to become Baylor's field agent in lifting the debt of \$92,000. As the trustees saw for the first time the slender and youthful man of twenty-three, still pale and hollow-eyed from his recent illness, their hearts sank within them. Their consternation showed plainly on their faces. While they did not put their thoughts into words, their expressions plainly said, "Has Dr. Carroll lost all the sense he ever had? Does he mean to play a joke on us? If this young fellow is to be our reliance, then indeed Baylor is doomed."

One of the trustees said: "Well, Dr. Carroll, we'll be going now."

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But they didn't go, for George Truett stood up and said: "No, brethren, you will not go now. You must hear me. You are no more amazed than I am. I am utterly inexperienced in this kind of thing. I have had very little college education, just a year and a half in a Junior College at Whitewright. I am almost wholly unknown in Texas. Not a dozen of the leaders in your State Convention ever saw me or heard of me. But Dr. Carroll has sought to convince me that it is the Lord's will for me to undertake this work. Brethren, if this be so, He will bring it to pass. Pray for me now and for the success of this campaign. I assure you that this business is not of my seeking. It was no desire of mine. In fact, I definitely declined it at first. But Dr. Carroll has convinced me that I ought to undertake it. I do not now know how it can be done but I am persuaded that our heavenly Father will show us the way if we trust Him and lean utterly upon Him. Will you pray for me now?"

As those trustees heard his voice, looked into his eyes and noted the faith, the frankness, the humility and the courage of the words and the bearing of that young man, their attitude underwent a transformation. "There is one thing I do know about George Truett—wherever he speaks, the people do what he asks them to do," had written Rev. R. F. Jenkins to Dr. Carroll. His statement received clear verification that day in the midst of a very important group—the trustees of Baylor. One of the most spiritual of their number was called upon to lead in prayer. That prayer sealed a contract. From that time on the trustees became wholly

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sympathetic and cooperative with George Truett and Dr. Carroll as they made their plans and went forth in faith to prosecute one of the most remarkable campaigns for Christian education ever conducted in America.

The Carroll home became Truett's home for the twenty-three months of the campaign, and afterwards—until he married. Those years are regarded by Dr. Truett as among the greatest blessings that ever came into his life. Dr. Carroll gave freely of his time to his young friend. Often they would talk far into the night. B. H. Carroll was one of the most widely read and best informed men in America. He read omnivorously, with lightning speed. He averaged two hundred and fifty pages a day for thirty-five years. And his photographic mind remembered what he read. He was massive physically, mentally and morally. He was as sensitive to the right as the needle of the compass is to the magnetic pole. Spiritually, he was as responsive and tender and compassionate as John, the beloved disciple. As a preacher, theologian, teacher, debater, Bible exegete, administrator, public-minded citizen and loyal friend he had no superiors and few equals. For a full generation he was regarded as the unrivaled moral and spiritual leader of Texas.

Dr. Carroll was six feet three, weighed two hundred and forty pounds, and wore a long beard that reached to his waist line. His clear, blue eyes often danced with merriment, but they could flash with the fires kindled by lofty thoughts and strong moral and spiritual passions. He was one of those rare men who walked the

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heights most of the time and even when he must needs tread the valleys he carried about him an atmosphere that suggested the eternal hills and caused others to gain strength in the midst of their weakness. There is no estimating the influence for good of Dr. Carroll on George Truett during those formative years when he lived in the Carroll home.

Dr. Carroll requested a temporary release from pastoral duties that he might help the young financial secretary plan and launch the campaign for funds. He wrote and published a letter to the Baptists of Texas, introducing to them George Truett and appealing to them to cooperate with him by opening their churches and their purses to him in behalf of Baylor. In this letter he said, "Don't shoot your arrows at this young David; shoot them at me. Invite him to visit you, pray for him, and help him." One of the first letters of invitation to reach the new secretary was from Rev. J. N. Marshall, an alumnus of Baylor, who was then pastor at Llano, Texas. The District Association was to meet in his church on a Saturday and continue their deliberations there for several days. In spite of the doubts felt by the deacons, Mr. Truett was asked to preach Sunday morning at the Llano Church. Forty-five years later, Rev. Marshall wrote of this occasion as follows:

Our house was packed to overflowing. After the preliminary services the young preacher arose and modestly announced his text: "All things are yours—and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." He began speaking quietly in measured sentences, and, as he spoke, his manner and his

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speech took on an intensity and earnest persuasiveness that has always characterized this great preacher. He rose to the highest heights of the noblest pronouncements of impassioned oratory just like George can always do. It would be futile to undertake to report the sermon. No one could do it justice, though to this day the message, its spirit, its passionate, fervent delivery, its matter, and its electrical effect is as clear on the tablet of memory as if it had been delivered yesterday. The audience was moved as one rarely sees people under the spell of a spiritual, rapturous appeal.

During former efforts many Texans had given their promissory notes to agents of Baylor but had never paid them, though long past due. Young Truett insisted that he be given the privilege of returning these notes to the pledgers wherever and whenever, in his judgment, he thought it best to do so. Said he, "We can get along at Baylor without their money, perhaps, but not without their friendship. People are the important thing. Win the people and they will willingly give the money."

During the campaign he disposed of all those old notes. Either he returned them or collected them. In many cases his offer to return the notes resulted in their prompt payment. The major emphasis of the new campaign was for cash and not for notes. The people seemed to like this new emphasis.

The first trip afield was made late in February, 1891. After the first few hundred dollars were sent in, Dr. Carroll, in reporting to the trustees, added a footnote which is still preserved in the archives of Baylor Uni-

versity. "Baylor University has a financial agent at last."

Everywhere Truett went the people did what he asked them to do. It was a continuing verification of the dictum of Rev. R. F. Jenkins who first directed Dr. Carroll's attention to the young preacher of White-wright. Dr. Carroll accompanied him to many places. Large churches, small churches, in the cities, in the country, wherever a group of the people could be assembled, there went these two missionaries for Baylor. What began as only a small blaze in the hearts of Carroll, Truett, the trustees and a few others, soon spread like a prairie fire. Of course, there were failures and discouragements and untold hardships and baffling defeats. But many of the seeming defeats turned into victories before the campaign was done.

On one occasion the two campaigners were scheduled to speak at a church in a remote community. The pastor had given the meeting good publicity and a large crowd of well-to-do Baptists was expected to attend the meeting. However, fate intervened and it began to rain several hours before the appointed time, so that only a handful of people ventured out in the storm, and over the muddy roads to the church. The younger man was greatly disappointed and exclaimed, "Dr. Carroll, of course we will not take a collection from this small group of people here today. Don't you think it best to dismiss them and let them go back to their homes now?"

Dr. Carroll looked sternly at him and said: "Brother Truett, never take counsel of your fears or of appear-

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ances; of course we will proceed just as though the tabernacle were full of people. I will preach, then you will speak to them about Baylor and take the offering as usual."

Dr. Truett tells us that Dr. Carroll then delivered one of the greatest messages he ever heard from him during the whole campaign. As soon as Carroll finished, Truett began and poured out his heart to those few men and women. During Dr. Carroll's sermon he had felt ashamed of himself and of his lack of faith. He realized that he had received a just, though kindly, rebuke from the great man. He asked God to forgive him and to give him the right words for that hour. And thus it was that when he asked those loyal souls for their contributions for Baylor, they responded with one of the noblest outpourings of generosity witnessed during the whole campaign. The pastor and both the visitors were amazed at the gifts and the evident joy of those people in giving. This was a lesson for the young preacher which he never forgot. That experience fortified him many times through the years to come.

George Truett witnessed some heroic donations in the debt-paying campaign. He saw people give all the cash they had and then give rings off their fingers and gold watches out of their pockets. They gave stocks and bonds and insurance policies and houses and lands and cattle and every kind of thing that represented money to them. George Truett, himself, on one occasion quietly slipped his own contribution into the collection plate. It was for \$500, all the money he had, a sum that he had been saving up for his own college

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course when he should have finished with his present task. He told no one what he had done, but when his check went through to the University treasurer, his reckless gift became known and quickly the people of Baylor and others in Texas knew that their financial agent practiced what he preached, though he sought to do it unobtrusively.

Of course, the contributions of the people of Texas in those days were very small compared with the millions they give today, since great wealth has come to the state. There were comparatively few rich Baptists in Texas in the 1890's. And so it was regarded as a very great achievement to have secured in cash virtually all of the \$92,000 needed to erase Baylor's debt.

In the twenty-third month of the campaign, Dr. Carroll and George Truett met in Waco to count up the total of all the gifts received. They were \$800 short of the goal.

Dr. Carroll said: "I think I know three men who will give me \$100 each, to-day. But I don't know where to get the \$500."

George Truett said: "Mr. C—— could give it all if he wanted to. He is ill, but I am going to see him anyway."

He went to see the sick man, who promptly inquired about the progress of the campaign. Mr. Truett told him they were within \$800 of the goal and said: "Dr. Carroll will see three men today and thinks he will get \$100 from each of them. But where the balance is to come from I don't know."

The sick man said, "Hand me my check book over

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there," and writing a check for \$500, he said, "Here's my share." Truett thanked him and then almost ran to the First Baptist Church in Waco where he met Dr. Carroll who greeted him with the words, "Here are my three checks for \$300."

And George Truett almost shouted, "And here's Mr. C——'s \$500!"

As Dr. Carroll took the check from George Truett's trembling hand, he turned his face upwards and said in a voice that sent chills up and down young Truett's spine, "*It is finished.*"

Then it was that George Truett sat down on the curb in front of the church and cried like a child.

Baptists of Texas were thrilled by the success of the campaign which had saved Baylor. But what was even more important, they had been won to a new appreciation of, and, therefore, a new loyalty to Baylor. And, incidentally, George Truett had walked straight into their confidence and their hearts.

But as soon as the campaign was over he had a complete let-down. He was utterly exhausted. He needed to "come apart and rest a while," as did the Twelve. He went home to his mother a man sick in body, but happy in heart. She nursed and comforted him just as though he were still her small son. Within a few weeks' time he was on the road to recovery. This rest was just what he needed to put him in good physical condition to enter Baylor University in September as a freshman, "the freshman who had saved the University from disaster, before he entered it as a student."

It was self-evident to George Truett, and to many

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others, that the same Lord who had called him to preach had also called him to give two fruitful years of his life as Baylor's financial secretary. In no other way could he possibly have become so well acquainted and identified in so brief a time with the Texas which was to be the center of the major work of his life. Instead of his recent experience weaning him away from his call to preach, it had just the opposite effect and strengthened him in the determination to honor that call by securing the best education and training possible. This explains in part why he has never ceased to be a student.

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THE American Magazine, November, 1925, carried an article entitled, "Out of the Mountains Came This Great Preacher of the Plains." In it, the writer, George W. Gray, quotes Dr. Truett as follows:

When at last the entire fund had been raised and the mortgage paid, I found that I had not only talked the people of Texas into giving \$92,000 to Baylor, but I had also talked myself into attending there. So in 1893, at the age of twenty-six, I enrolled as a college freshman.

Hayesville Academy, Hiawassee Academy, and Grayson College had helped to lay the foundations on which Baylor would build an admirable structure of culture and character for George Truett. He spent four years (from 1893 to 1897) in her well-beloved halls.

It is doubtful whether any freshman ever entered a university with a better reputation with the faculty and student body. He was widely acclaimed as the young man who had done the well-nigh impossible. He was known as the protégé of the great Carroll who held him in such high esteem and genuine affection. That, of itself, would have unlocked for him all doors at Baylor

and in Waco. But George Truett has never been one to rest on his oars nor to rely on past performances to get him by as he faces the challenge of present duties. Therefore he went about his school duties diligently, modestly and eagerly. He was quite content to be known as just one of the "Baylor boys."

Ministerial students are not always held in high esteem on the campuses of denominational colleges. Often just the reverse is true. Frequently they are poor boys from the farm. The Lord seems to specialize in country-bred fellows who come from homes of modest means when he is looking for preachers. Of course, that is not always true, but it is true enough to establish the rule.

If only the non-ministerial students of the campus could look ahead a few years and see the marvelous development which takes place in so many of the preacher boys of whom they think so lightly during their college days, how different their attitudes would be! The transformation which takes place in young preachers within just a few years is a mighty tribute to the cultural influence of the gospel.

George Truett, however, was never handicapped or embarrassed by any such negative attitude on the part of his fellow-students. He had their respect from the day he enrolled and he never lost it. His mind, his manner and his unassuming ways, together with his evident genuineness and friendliness, increased their respect and won their confidence and admiration.

He had given all of his personal savings to Baylor during the campaign. He preferred to pay his own way

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through college. Hence, when the small East Waco Baptist Church, soon after he entered Baylor, invited him to become their student pastor, he gladly accepted. In speaking of this he said, "They agreed to pay me four hundred dollars a year for experimenting on them. I continued to be their pastor all through my four years at the University. Before I finished, they had raised my salary to one thousand dollars and I had married." His brand of "experimenting" was successful. During those four years the church more than doubled its membership and erected and paid for a new church building. It became a very popular place for the students to worship, and often members of the faculty went to hear the young pastor preach.

Judge W. H. Jenkins was one of the trustees of the University and one of the leading citizens of the city. He had attended Baylor when it was located in Independence. He had married Miss Jessie Speight, member of a distinguished Texas family and a graduate of Baylor University. Judge Jenkins was an honored deacon in the First Baptist Church of Waco, a long-time superintendent of its Sunday school, and a man on whom both the church and the University leaned heavily in all matters calling for wise counsel and spiritual insight. Judge Jenkins was one of those trustees who had grave misgivings about Dr. Carroll's sanity when he presented young Truett to them as Baylor's prospective financial secretary. But George Truett had won his friendship that day, and, to the day of his death, Judge Jenkins' admiration for him never wavered.

Josephine, the eldest of Judge Jenkins' nine children,

was a student in Baylor and heard the account which her father gave to the family of the young man Dr. Carroll had engaged as Baylor's agent. She remembers how her father frankly spoke of his initial doubts and how young Mr. Truett had largely removed those doubts by his straightforward speech and manner. Josephine was not particularly impressed at the time by what her father said about this stranger. Soon, further reports began to reach her from the Carroll family about the rather unusual young man who had become a member of their household. Harvey Carroll, Jr., then twenty years of age, was especially industrious in carrying these reports to the Jenkins girls. Harvey was becoming a fervent admirer of young Truett. During those financial-agent days of George Truett, there was born a life-time friendship between him and young Harvey Carroll. Repeatedly Harvey tried to arrange a meeting between Josephine and George but months went by before they met. George Truett's interest was not in girls just then, but only in the overwhelming task of helping Baylor. Neither was Josephine interested in him nor any other young preacher, especially in one who had never gone to college. She was not wholly free from the campus prejudices and could not imagine herself ever becoming personally interested in any young preacher. She thought that Harvey Carroll's constant talk about George Truett was nothing but evidence of a boy's hero worship of an older man.

When finally she did happen to meet George Truett, she found him interesting because he was "different." Just how he was "different" she could not at first deter-

mine. He was like other young men in that he took immediate interest in her. He seemed wholly at ease as he engaged her in conversation. He looked straight into her eyes and told her that he had been eagerly looking forward to meeting her since Harvey and the other Carrolls had spoken of her so often.

These mutual good impressions were not at all lessened when he paid his first visit at the Jenkins home. In spite of her prejudice against young ministers she was agreeably surprised to find that the evening passed pleasantly and that it was no burden to talk with him. She felt at ease and rather challenged and stimulated by his agile mind and the versatility of his conversation. His voice was altogether pleasing. His smile was contagious because it was in his eyes as well as on his lips. The young woman was analyzing him, and that was a promising sign, though she hardly realized it. As for him, he found her entertaining. She asked intelligent questions. She drew him out. She, too, had a quick mind as well as a beautiful face and a charming manner. As proof that he was enjoying the evening he stayed until eleven o'clock, the curfew hour for all young men visitors at the Jenkins home.

Then he was away to the battles of the fund campaign. She heard not a word from him. Harvey reported that his father had said, "Brother Truett is making good impressions on the people and he is getting good collections for Baylor. I feel more and more hopeful that the campaign will succeed." No one knew that these reports had any special interest for Miss Josephine any more than for hundreds of other Baylor

students. She argued with herself that they did not; but, for some reason, the arguments were not convincing. She heard that he had returned to Waco on several hurried occasions. But he had not passed through her front gate and his voice had not greeted her. Then she began to feel that he and his work held no special interest for her. For Baylor's sake, she hoped he would succeed, and tried to dismiss him from her thoughts. Months went by.

Then one day she received a note from him saying that he would soon be in Waco for a day or two and would like very much to call on her. She did not reply. When he arrived in town he renewed his request. She saw him the last evening he was to be in Waco before starting on another trip. Woman-like, she was very formal and indifferent to him that evening.

However, there were other visits in the Jenkins home. On one of them, time passed so swiftly that the curfew hour came and went unnoticed. The hour of twelve struck on some clock. The light on the vine-clad porch was not very good. Hurriedly the caller tiptoed down the front steps. The family dog, "Old Shep," was sleeping peacefully at their foot and George's foot landed on his tail. The injured dog's yelps woke up everybody in the house and aroused all the dogs in the vicinity. George did not take time to open the gate. He cleared it at one bound and was on his rapid way down the street, appalled by the barking of the neighborhood dogs now excited by "Shep's" outraged cries of distress. When he arrived home, he awakened Harvey Carroll and exclaimed, "Plague-

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take-it! Dogs ought to be more careful where they leave their tails lying around at midnight." Laughter kept Miss Josephine from sleep a long time that night. And at the breakfast table next morning her explanation of the midnight rumpus was not very convincing to the family.

It is the old story which is ever new. Two people who were destined for each other had met. Neither of them knew at first what was happening to them. But happen it did, inevitably.

The friendship of his campaigning days soon ripened into serious courtship during his college days and they were married on June 28, 1894. All, in position to know, have agreed that it was, and has ever remained, an ideal match. She has, through all the years, proved to be the inspiration, comfort, shield, critic, and comrade he has needed.

An article in the Encyclopedia of American Biography on "George W. Truett, Minister" recognized this fact in the following paragraph:

No record of Dr. Truett's life could claim even partial completeness if it did not stress the constant aid and tender inspiration which his wife has been to him through the years of their married life. His marriage to Josephine Jenkins was one of the really important events of his life. . . . "She has made herself a buffer between him and endless details. His friends frequently wonder at his endurance under the strain of his enormous church and other gigantic undertakings. Half the answer lies in his rugged body and unusual vitality, an inheritance from the sturdy discipline of the farm, the mountain and the woods. The other half

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lies in Mrs. Truett, her sheltering oversight, and her consecration to her husband's task, which she has also made her own."

The following lines,¹ written by Ella Vilosa Freeman, are dedicated to Josephine Truett and best express the place she occupies in her noted husband's life:

LOVE

*Had she been less unselfish in her love,
She might have tried to keep him all her own,
Not sharing with the multitudes in need
Affection that she craved for self alone.*

*Had she been less unselfish in her love,
That love had proved an able hindering weight
And kept him from the blue-topped mountain heights,
Though she had chose an eagle for her mate.*

*They built Love's home on towering peaks above
The place they labored in the traffic's roar,
And she who was unselfish in her love,
Found there was room for both of them to soar.*

During George Truett's freshman year a remarkable evangelistic meeting was begun by Dr. Carroll in his own church, the First Baptist of Waco. One Sunday evening a group of young people in the church came to Dr. Carroll and said they had been praying for a revival and felt that the time was ripe for him to begin

¹ Used by permission.

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special services in his own church. He began that very night and kept right on for a month until he was stricken with a severe illness. The whole church and town had been stirred by his masterly preaching twice a day for a month. Many had been converted, but there were multitudes in the community unreached as yet. Dr. Carroll and many of the church members thought the meeting should continue. "But who can step into the breach and carry on the meeting after the powerful preaching of our pastor?" asked the members of the church. Dr. Carroll had the answer. He sent for freshman Truett who was then pastor of the little East Waco Church. He invited him to take over the meeting. Truett was very hesitant about going into it, but, as usual, he found it difficult to say no to anything Dr. Carroll asked of him. He had but few sermons and thought none of them worthy of following in a series begun by the great Carroll. However, he consented to do the best he could.

George Truett began his new task the next Sunday morning. A great crowd filled the church. Hardly had the service begun when a notoriously dissipated man of Waco came in and took a seat in the rear. The young preacher did amazingly well. Numbers came forward confessing Christ and asking for a place in the church. Then a ripple of amazement spread through the audience when the notorious man in the rear arose, went forward, took the preacher by the hand and asked that he might be privileged to say a few words. With tears streaming down his face he broke into a startlingly frank confession of the sins of his riotous life. He asked

for the forgiveness of God and of the people of Waco and avowed his solemn purpose to lead a new life. The sermon and that man's professed conversion were the subject of lively comment in many homes of the town that day.

But, as evening came on, the young preacher was utterly at sea as to what he should preach about that night. All texts and sermons he had previously used forsook him utterly. In desperation he went to a dark room in the basement of the church some thirty or forty minutes before the beginning of the service, there to call on God in prayer. In a little while, two men, Judge Jenkins and Judge Scarborough, entered the room and kneeling, began to pray for George Truett and for the service that night. Then they left, never having discovered the presence of the third man in the dark room. They had scarcely left the room when a certain text flashed into the young preacher's mind—a text on which he had never preached. Quickly he turned on the light and read the text and its context, II Kings 7:3. "Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?" A sermon outline of the passage, together with pungent and apt illustrations, leaped into his mind. He thanked God, arose from his knees, went up stairs and preached to an overflow audience of people, scores of whom were converted that very hour. One of the disappointments in his life is the fact that from that day to this he has never been able to remember his outline treatment of the text he used that night. A thousand times he has sought to

recall that sermon, but apparently it is gone forever.

With such a wonderful initial day, it is not surprising that ever-increasing throngs flocked to the church to hear the young preacher deliver his sermons wrought out on the anvil of necessity. He attended his classes at the University between times, he gave attention to the emergency calls from his own flock at the East Waco Church, and he found additional time, somehow, for many conferences about personal religious matters with people who had become interested during the meeting. It turned out to be the greatest revival meeting ever held in Waco up to that time, and went right on for nearly another month. Dr. Carroll had paved the way in securing the most thoughtful attention of the church and the city by his powerful doctrinal preaching. Then came George Truett, as came the youthful Charles H. Spurgeon to London, with his appeals to conscience and to heart, and thrusting the sharp sickle of his prayer-born messages into the ripened grain. The inevitable result was an abundant harvest of souls.

Again Dr. Carroll's judgment had been vindicated. The church, the University, the whole city had been benefited. And the praises of this Baylor freshman were sounded from the Gulf to the far western plains of Texas. People found it difficult to believe what they heard and read about this young man who had had such a vital part in the great evangelistic victory in the cultured First Baptist Church of Waco and such success in pulling a university out of the quagmire of debt. But he had wrought both of these remarkable works under the aegis of Dr. Carroll. It is no wonder that he

felt towards B. H. Carroll very much as Joshua must have felt towards Moses.

For six years George Truett had almost daily contact with his friend and teacher, Dr. B. H. Carroll. That in itself was a liberal education. He had free access to the Carroll private library which was one of the very best in the South. Dr. Carroll took delight in introducing his young friend to the great books on theology, history, literature, biography, philosophy, homiletics, Christian apologetics, Biblical criticism, and other subjects of special interest to an alert young preacher. Dr. Carroll was never happier than when talking to Truett far into the night on the great themes of religion, philosophy and literature. He gave to George Truett hundreds of hours of Socratic fellowship. He sought to lay solid foundations in the mind and heart of his protégé for the great work in life which he felt the young man would do. Student Truett never missed an opportunity to hear his teacher lecture, or converse, or preach.

Thus far nothing has been said of the faculty in Baylor when George Truett was a student there. They also contributed much to the development of his mind and to the increase of his culture. They were scholars and Christian gentlemen, who took delight in the progress made by their studious and responsive pupil. Although he had many extra-curricular duties and interests, he never shirked his class work. He never offered excuses on Monday because he had preached on Sunday.

From the time of his call to preach, George Truett

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thought he would certainly go to college and also would graduate from a theological seminary, preferably the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, as that was the foremost Baptist seminary in the country even then. He had seen and heard Dr. John A. Broadus of the Louisville faculty when the Southern Baptist Convention met at Fort Worth, Texas, in May, 1890. That was before young Truett's decision to preach. He was profoundly impressed with this famous teacher and preacher, especially with his public reading of the Scriptures. He said to himself at the close of the reading, "That surely is the way to read the Bible."

Does someone ask why it took George Truett four years to graduate from Baylor University, in view of the fact that he entered at the age of twenty-six, intellectually well developed, very well read, and possessed of great capacity for work? The answer is that he mastered all his courses, doing much parallel work not assigned in the class rooms; under the tutelage of Dr. Carroll he acquired the essence of a theological course; during those four years he was pastor of a rapidly growing church; he took time out to attend state and Southern conventions of Baptists; he married and set up a home; he answered frequent calls to speak at the University, in Waco and numerous places in Texas. They were four very full years.

Finally, time for graduation came in June, 1897. Naturally, George Truett was selected as one of the commencement orators. He spoke on "*The Inspiration of Ideals.*"

Invitations to consider calls to several distinguished pulpits in the South came to him about this time, but he gave them no encouragement. As he said forty years later, "I was quite happy with the East Waco Church which had been so good to me during all my college days. My thought was that I'd live and die right there, close to the people, close to Baylor, close to Dr. Carroll and Judge Jenkins, and other dear friends. Perhaps, after a year, I would get away for study in the Seminary, but I was sure that I would wish to come back to my East Waco flock. I thought my problems were settled for me."

The joy in the Truett home over the arrival of their first child was disturbed by a very serious problem which was unexpectedly thrust upon the young pastor and his wife that summer. A call had come to them from the First Baptist Church of Dallas, one of the leading churches of Texas at that time. Other great churches had called him, or expressed a desire to do so. He had had no difficulty in saying no to them. But there was something about the Dallas call which seemed to make it different from the others. We now know what made the difference—the same divine element that led away from Hiawassee and Mercer to Texas, that started him on the campaign for Baylor's debt, that directed his heart to Josephine Jenkins, that threw him into close fellowship with B. H. Carroll. Dallas it had to be.

The Baylor and Waco days were drawing to a close and the Dallas years were about to begin.

Early Years in Dallas

A COMMITTEE from the First Baptist Church of Dallas wrote again and again to the young minister of the East Waco Church about becoming their pastor. He urged them not to extend the call, pleading that he was quite happy where he was, and that, furthermore, he planned to go to the Theological Seminary as soon as he felt it might be feasible for him to leave his present charge. That was early in the summer of 1897.

The committee reported Pastor Truett's words to the Dallas church. But such glowing accounts of George Truett had reached the church that they became only more convinced that he was the one man they wanted. The committee reported the high esteem in which he was held by Dr. Cranfill, Dr. Buckner, Dr. Carroll and others in Waco and elsewhere who had had the opportunity of knowing him. The Dallas church, therefore, decided to ignore Truett's plea, and voted unanimously to call him. This forced the young Waco pastor to face the issue. He went to Dallas to confer with the committee and the deacons after the church had called him over his protest. Courtesy demanded that he do that. There he met such excellent men as Colonel W. L. Williams, a most devoted and useful

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Christian, and Colonel C. C. Slaughter, one of the influential Baptists of Texas, who subsequently became noted for his generous church support.

During that conference many facts about the First Baptist Church of Dallas were revealed to George Truett. There was a church debt of twelve thousand dollars with no provision for its retirement, except from a percentage of the unbudgeted income of the church. Special collections for missions and benevolences were not allowed, but five per cent of whatever was voluntarily given by the people was allocated to these "outside causes."

Promptly and firmly, the young Waco pastor told the group that he would have to decline the call unless certain conditions and practices were changed. "I must be free to take special offerings whenever the need for them appears. If I am to become your pastor, then you must agree that I can be free to present an appeal for missions and benevolences whenever the denominational program calls for it."

All eyes flew open with amazement. But they replied, "Very well, Brother Truett, if you insist on that policy. We want you as our pastor and are willing to follow your lead. But we doubt the wisdom of your taking special collections during these hard times."

George Truett had spoken bravely and wisely from a sense of deep conviction as to principles involved. His words made a deep impression on these men, the trustees of the First Baptist Church. They sincerely thought that they were applying "business methods" to the financial affairs of the church. The presence of a

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twelve thousand dollar debt had caused them to pass a rule in the church that no new indebtedness for any cause should be made by the church. They had been overlooking the fact that a church is a spiritual organization and should be operated on spiritual principles, which frequently are quite at variance with the operating methods of the business world.

Although George Truett was just thirty years old and looked much younger, he spoke to those business and professional men with such a note of authority and reasonableness that they recognized his power at once and found themselves yielding to the spell of his personality, in spite of the fact that his frankly announced intentions were at variance with their own valued policies. Again the saying of the old Whitewright preacher, "Wherever he speaks, the people do what he asks them to do," was borne out. They were ready to do what he asked because they felt he would ask of them only what he believed to be right. They thought they might not always agree with the details of his asking, but were satisfied that they would approve of his principles and his motives. And that was a happy foundation on which to begin a pastorate. George Truett was deeply impressed with the reasonableness and the spiritual potentialities of these men. With their hearty cooperation he felt that great work could be done in the First Baptist Church of Dallas.

On the second Sunday in September, 1897, he began his ministry as pastor of this church. There he has remained for forty-one years.

The church had 715 members and an excellent building for that time. The congregation was a unit with

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respect to their new pastor. The Truett and their baby girl, Jessie,¹ were soon installed in a comfortable frame dwelling, some eight or ten blocks from the church. George Truett took hold of his new work in his usual vigorous way.

On his second Sunday with them he called in the trustees for a conference with regard to a special offering for state missions. He pointed out to them that the state missions books for the year would close at the end of September. He was reminded again that the church was not accustomed to special collections, and hence he must not be disappointed if the offering for state missions should be small. He asked: "How much do you brethren think we can get?"

The trustees said: "Twenty-five dollars at the most."

The pastor replied: "Brethren, you are not speaking seriously; I expect to give that amount myself. Surely Colonel Slaughter here will give at least one hundred dollars."

They roared with laughter, thinking it was a good joke on Colonel Slaughter. But the collection for state missions amounted to three hundred dollars and Colonel Slaughter had given one hundred of it. He was overheard to say, "I shouldn't be surprised if some day we should get as much as a thousand dollars in one of his special collections." And that third Sunday in September, 1897, marked the beginning of many more generous gifts from Colonel Slaughter and many others in that church.

¹ Jessie Truett became Mrs. Powhatan W. James. Other children of Dr. and Mrs. Truett are: Mary (Mrs. Thomas W. Gilliam) and Annie Sallee (Mrs. Robert Lee Milliken).

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Word quickly spread over Dallas of the happenings at the First Baptist Church. The trustees were glad at the immediate improvement in the church finances. But they continued to feel greatly worried for the future because of an old debt of twelve thousand dollars which had been reduced but little out of the current collections. An old Confederate soldier, not a member of any church, hearing of the good work going on at the First Baptist Church, made his will and left a certain piece of real estate to the church. When he died soon after, the church came into possession of this property which was promptly sold for \$12,800. The church was out of debt and had \$800 in the treasury! At last they were free. "Full steam ahead" became the order of the day.

The church began to grow in numbers and in contributions. One of the outstanding factors in the long pastorate of George Truett at Dallas has been the constant additions to the church "on profession of faith." He has always preached for decisions for Christ then and there. Nothing is more stimulating than the thrill of having new converts at almost every public service. That began to happen at Dallas almost from the first, and it has continued through all the years. It helps to keep a church toned up spiritually as no other one thing can do. There is an inspiration in having crowds and in seeing constant progress. There is also a powerful stimulus when a steady stream of new members flows into the fellowship of the local church.

Thus it was that the new pastor quickly found his way into the hearts of the people. They loved him and

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were proud of him long before his fame had spread beyond Texas.

Then befell a tragedy which nearly crushed his sensitive soul and bound him and his people together with the eternal ties of love and sympathy. The great tragedy of George Truett's life has been told frequently, partially, and often inaccurately, by people who were uninformed or misinformed. He has ever been most reticent about it, not because there was anything to conceal, but simply because a sensitive soul hesitates to speak of one's personal Gethsemane.

Briefly as possible the true story follows:

Captain J. C. Arnold of the Texas Rangers had become Chief of Police of Dallas and was a devoted member of the First Baptist Church. He became very fond of his new pastor, George Truett, and insisted that he go with him on a quail hunt in Johnson County where birds were plentiful. He owned good bird dogs and loved to hunt them. He provided his preacher with gun and ammunition. They went by train to Cleburne, Texas, where they were joined by their mutual friend, Dr. George W. Baines, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Cleburne; and the three went by horse and carriage to the hunting grounds. Late in the afternoon they were returning to the place where they had left the conveyance. Captain Arnold was walking along a path a few paces in front. Truett shifted his gun from one arm to the other and in so doing the trigger on the hammerless gun was touched. A load of bird shot struck Chief Arnold in the calf of the leg. It was not a very bad wound, but almost instantly George Truett

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had a premonition that it would prove fatal, despite the smiling efforts of Captain Arnold to make light of his wound. It was several hours before they reached Dallas. Doctors and nurses said it was not a very serious wound. But their words failed to reassure or comfort pastor Truett. He was in an agony of anxiety and self-condemnation for what he regarded as his carelessness in handling his gun. He paced the floor day and night. He was unable to sleep and he ate practically nothing. A visit to the Arnold home added to his agony of spirit, in spite of the cheerful words of doctors and nurses. From the first he sensed that Chief Arnold would not recover. He sought to comfort Mrs. Arnold, who, also, was a faithful member of his church, but he realized how empty his words must sound.

Mrs. Truett was wonderful in her calmness. Had it not been for her sublime Christian understanding, surely his reason would have gone. The hour for the Wednesday evening prayer meeting came on, and a large group met and prayed, both for the wounded member and for the heart-broken pastor. All prayers at the church that night were for the consolation of their beloved pastor and the recovery of Chief Arnold. But neither their prayers nor those of the pastor availed. That night Mr. Arnold died, not of blood poisoning, as has so often been erroneously stated, but of coronary thrombosis.

All Dallas was shocked at the sudden and unexpected death of their Chief of Police. Apparently no one except George Truett had thought he would die. The funeral was held in the auditorium of the church and

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was attended by a great throng. The funeral message was given by the cherished friend of the two men—Dr. George W. Baines.

George Truett's father and mother came to Dallas from Whitewright and Judge and Mrs. Jenkins from Waco. Their broken-hearted children needed them. Messages of sympathy for Pastor Truett poured in from all over the city and state and beyond. But he felt that he was done for, that he could never preach again because of the poignantly tragic death of his dear friend. He knew that it was accidental, but that did not change his feelings about it. He could not get away from the terrible thought that the blood of a friend would stain forever his hands which "carelessly" or "awkwardly" handled that shot-gun.

He told his beloved Josephine that he could never preach again, that he would have to leave the ministry. Brave wife! She told him she hoped he was wrong about that, but if it was to be as he said, she was sure they could find some quiet place to work in the world and to build their lives anew. Then they poured out their hearts in self-forgetful prayer for Mrs. Arnold. Was there solace in that? There was for Josephine, but, apparently, not for George. Multitudes of human hands and hearts were reaching out to him in loving sympathy, but he was still in the black shadows. Day and night he read the Bible, especially the Psalms and Job and the closing chapters of the four Gospels.

Would he, could he, return to his pulpit on Sunday? The early hours of Saturday night were spent in prayer and scripture reading. Over and over he could be heard

saying: "My times are in thy hands." Late that night, for the first time since the accident, he fell asleep.

Some time during that night there came to him a dream in which he saw Jesus as vividly and realistically as some earthly friend standing beside him. And he heard the Master say to him, "Be not afraid. You are my man from now on." He awoke. He waked his wife and told her. A second time he slept and the same vision and words were repeated. Again he told his wife what he had seen and heard. Again he slept, and again the Master came and spoke to him, just as before.

This three-fold vision² marked a real turning point in the life of George Truett. From then on he has never had one moment's doubt as to the reality of Jesus and his own commission as Christ's man.

Word got around that he would preach Sunday morning and night. Nearby Methodist and Presbyterian pastors adjourned their services to worship with their friend at the night service. When he appeared in the pulpit his eyes were sunken in dark hollows from

² This is the first time an account of his dream, or vision, or whatever you may be pleased to call it, has been put into print. He has told it to less than a dozen people. He realized that it would tax the credulity of many. He told the writer about it as we rode on a train to West Texas in 1917, not long before he went over-seas to preach to the Allied Armies. I have verified my memory of his account by recent questions asked him. He frankly wonders if it is wise to disclose on the printed page this remarkable and life-determining experience. But it has been such a vital factor in his spiritual life and explains so many things in his amazing ministry that I have prevailed upon him to let me tell the world about it.

One question I asked him was, "What did Jesus look like as you saw him in that vision?"

He replied, "He looked just like I had always pictured him in my mind, beautiful and glorious beyond all words."

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the week's sleeplessness, and his sensitive face was marked with deep lines of suffering.

"But his voice! I shall never forget his voice that morning, as we heard for the first time the note of sadness and pathos which now we know so well," said one of the members. "It seemed to carry the burden of all the grief in the world."

"That week's ordeal was heart-breaking for the pastor; but there is no doubt it is the crucial experience of his life. It is the event that has molded him more than any other. No one can come to him with a sorrow greater than his sorrow. His vast capacity for helping people in trouble, as well as his power in the pulpit, is born of the tragedy which re-made him."

Had this member, whom we have just quoted, known of the three-fold vision of the night time, he would have had a better understanding of what it was that really "re-made him." Paul cannot be explained apart from his vision on the Damascus road and neither can George Truett be explained apart from the dream he had of Christ. Writers and speakers are ever groping for the secret of his power. The innermost secret is to be found in the experience of that Saturday night so long ago, when Jesus said to him, "Be not afraid. You are my man from now on."

Mrs. Arnold's attitude toward Dr. Truett was ever that of a most faithful, loyal member of his church. Again and again she voiced her heart's profoundest sympathy and unceasing prayers for her pastor. There was never any semblance of censure, because she well realized that the misfortune was an accident. The

Truetts did everything within their power to help and comfort her. And she sought to match their sympathy for her with her own sympathy for them, even to the last day of her life.

The joy of his congregation at the resumption of his ministry among them was unbounded. They were not long in discovering new notes in his preaching and in his pastoral work. Notes of tenderness and compassion and self-forgetfulness and love were added in such measure that the symphony of his service was greatly enriched and deepened in its appeal to human hearts. He had always gone about doing good and he had always preached with power; but now his missions of mercy were multiplied in number and in effectiveness, and his preaching reached the hearts of people as never before. Crowds flocked to hear him preach and multitudes yielded to the Christ whom he proclaimed with an intensity and vividness such as they had never heard. With a mighty compassion he ministered to his flock and went forth seeking others.

It was at this time that the legend that he never smiles arose. Of course nothing could be further from the truth. For a while after the tragedy he may have found it difficult to smile. But not for long. It is true that he does not smile much in the pulpit because preaching, to him, is ever an intensely serious matter. But in social and informal circles he has a most infectious and frequent smile, as all his intimates can testify. Frequently he will have a group of friends roaring with laughter over his keen sense of humor. His grandchildren take great delight in certain of his

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stories and insist on his telling them over and over again. He does not tell humorous stories in the pulpit. As a humorist he is at his best in his own home on Sunday nights after a hard day's work. Then he loves to have his family and friends around him when he can unbend and talk and laugh until midnight or later. He never wants to go to bed at night and like Sir Harry Lauder, he never wants to get up in the early morning. The lights in the Truett home are rarely ever cut off until very late at night, unless he is away.

An unfortunate controversy arose among Texas Baptists during the early years of Dr. Truett's ministry at Dallas. Many prominent denominational leaders in the state were drawn into this unseemly affair, which was called the Hayden-Cranfill Controversy. Two Baptist editors, Dr. S. A. Hayden and Dr. J. B. Cranfill, both very able men, became the spear-heads of the opposing sides. The former editor made continued attacks on certain of the denominational workers and their methods of work. Repeated and earnest appeals were made to this editor to desist from his attacks. But he grew even more insistent in his onslaughts upon the state leaders.

In time the Baptist General Convention of Texas refused him a seat as a messenger. Civil suit for damages was then instituted by him against fifty or more leaders of the Convention.

This suit, and appeals growing out of it, dragged on for several years. In the end, the case was settled out of court. While it was still going on and feeling was running high, it seemed as though Baptist unity and co-

operation in Texas would be hopelessly wrecked. But, just the reverse took place. It welded together the forces of the Baptist General Convention of Texas as they had never been joined before and marked the beginning of cooperative effort on a large scale.

The brother from whom the Convention withdrew fellowship organized another convention, known as The Baptist Missionary Association, into which went a number of churches throughout the state. As the years have passed, many of these churches have come back into the fellowship of the General Convention. Time has healed the old wounds and fortunately there is a growing friendliness and cooperation between all the Baptists of Texas in these later years. Leaders on both sides of this denominational fence have been big enough and Christian enough to forgive and forget and to go on about their tasks as true Christians. Many of them hope that some day, not far off, there will be no fence between them.

The only reason why George Truett was made one of the many defendants in the famous suit was the fact that he was the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Baptist State Executive Board and, by virtue of his office, had read the resolution of dismissal before the State Convention; and the further fact that he was pastor of several of the other defendants, and hence was supposed to have influenced them in their votes to turn Dr. Hayden out of the Convention.

Fortunately for all concerned, there was humor in certain phases of the trial that eased the tension. On one occasion Dr. B. H. Carroll was being cross-

examined by the chief counsel for the plaintiff, a rather worldly man, who tried to take advantage of the defendants. Dr. Carroll was quite deaf and had to use a large ear-trumpet to hear at all. The lawyer propounded to him a long, hypothetical question and demanded a "yes" or "no" answer. It was one of those shrewd questions designed to get the witness in trouble no matter which way he answered. Dr. Carroll was too smart to get caught in any such trap. And so he played for time.

Dr. Carroll said: "Mr. Attorney, you shout into my trumpet so loud I cannot hear so well. If you will put your question in a lower tone of voice I think it will be better."

The long, involved question was repeated. Whereupon Dr. Carroll said: "Now that was just a little *too* low. If you could pitch your voice just about midway between those two efforts I think it would be almost ideal for me to hear." The attorney was furious, because both judge and jury were much amused. So, once more, the long, hypothetical question was repeated.

By this time Dr. Carroll had thoroughly digested the question and, removing his trumpet from his ear, he proceeded to explain the nature and purpose of the question to the jury and show to them how impossible it was to make a "yes" or "no" answer. The lawyer was frantic. He implored the judge to stop him. He shouted, he raved, but Dr. Carroll went right on. The jury and the other lawyers and the audience roared with laughter. The judge said, "I am sorry, but under the circumstances I know of no way to silence this witness. Can

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you suggest a way we can make him hear without his ear-trumpet?"

Finally the lawyer said, "I am through with the witness," and the sheriff waved him aside, but not before Dr. Carroll had put in some very telling remarks to the jury.

That evening as they left the court room the attorney said, "Well, old man Carl (as he pronounced Carroll), that smart old bell-wether of the Baptists, came mighty high ruining me today."

George Truett and his church were unavoidably drawn into this unhappy and unnecessary struggle. They were utterly loyal to the established work of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and have ever remained so. He bore his part of the expense of the trial. It was a time that tried the mettle of men. The way he conducted himself throughout this unhappy period bound Cranfill, Gambrell, Buckner, Carroll and other state leaders to him for life. All of the principals involved in this notable controversy have since died, except Truett and Cranfill. They still abide in strength and in the bonds of friendship.

At the time of the Hayden controversy, J. B. Gambrell was a comparatively new man in the state, having come to Texas from Mississippi where he had attained distinction as a wise Baptist leader. He soon won a place of commanding influence in Texas—a place that caused Dr. Hayden to feel justified in naming him as one of the defendants in the famous damage suit. J. B. Gambrell joined the First Baptist Church of Dallas

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where he remained until his death. He and his pastor became the best of friends and they worked closely together for many years. They campaigned together; they slept and ate and spoke together; they journeyed to Europe together. Each was a stimulus to the other. Gambrell's wit and humor and homely philosophy and optimism were unfailing. He dissolved many a difficult situation by an apt story. He became Secretary of the State Mission Board of Texas, editor of "*The Baptist Standard*," President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and his last years were spent as a member of the faculty of the Southwestern Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. J. B. Gambrell did much to mold Baptist history in Texas and throughout the South. His presence in the audience was ever an inspiration to George Truett, and his friendship was valued by his pastor among his most prized possessions.

George Truett had been at Dallas only a few years when the Trustees of Baylor University tendered him the Presidency of that institution and brought much pressure to bear to induce him to accept. In many ways it was a tempting offer. The pace at Dallas had been so furious from the start that there was a distinct appeal in the calmer duties and privileges at his beloved Baylor. Mrs. Truett secretly hoped that he would accept. Waco and Baylor were very dear to her, and to all her family. But she refrained from trying to influence his decision.

He gave the matter serious consideration and then declined, saying, "I have sought and found the shep-

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herd heart of a pastor. I must remain at Dallas." His decision brought a sigh of relief to his Dallas flock and to many others in that city.

His first appearance as a speaker on a program of the Southern Baptist Convention was at Norfolk, Virginia, in May, 1898. At the invitation of Judge Jonathan Haralson, President of the Convention for ten years, and last of the long-term presidents, he delivered the "response" to the address of welcome, and did it so well that he was selected by the committee to preach the Convention Sermon the following year at Louisville, Kentucky. The subject of that sermon was, "The Subject and the Object of the Gospel," (Text—Eph. 3:8), which was published in his first volume of sermons.³ It is an excellent discourse but not regarded as one of his best. At that time he was thirty-two years of age, one of the youngest men ever to deliver the Convention Sermon.

On December 1, 1904, Robert H. Coleman, a Kentuckian, became Dr. Truett's lay assistant and Sunday school superintendent, and has remained in these responsible positions ever since. No pastor ever had a more loyal or helpful associate. He has been a tower of strength, and an unfailing friend to his pastor whom he loves with deep devotion. Dr. Truett says, "The Lord never made a whiter soul or a truer man than Bob Coleman." There is only one "Bob." He has never been known to sound a low note. His smile is perennial. His good cheer is contagious. A very successful publisher

³ *We Would See Jesus*, p. 199 ff., published by Fleming H. Revell Co.

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of song books, he has ever been prodigally liberal in his gifts to the causes of Christ. What Ira D. Sankey was to D. L. Moody, R. H. Coleman has been and is to George W. Truett.

The early years in Dallas were only a prophecy of the richer, fuller years which were to follow.

Preacher to the Cowboys

IN THE SUMMER of 1902 George Truett, the city pastor, was invited to conduct a week's meeting among the cowboys of the Davis Mountain country of West Texas, between Dallas and El Paso. He went, saw, conquered, and was conquered by, these "sons of the saddle." For more than a generation he has gone back nearly every summer. His "religious round-up of the cowboys," as it has been called, has been unique among the religious assemblies of America. It is the one big occasion of the year for scores of cattlemen and hundreds of their range riders and there is often an attendance of 2,500 persons. For hundreds of miles they come to the campmeeting, now located at Paisano Pass. This pass is the highest point on the Southern Pacific Railway, between New Orleans and San Francisco.

Peter Clarke MacFarlane tells us of these meetings in "The Religious Roundup of the Cowboys."¹

Dr. Truett can hate the sin and love the sinner and make the sinner understand that he feels both emotions. Said some one to me: "He makes the strongest prohibition

¹From the January 4, 1913, issue of *Collier's*, *The National Weekly*. Reprinted by permission.

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speeches I ever heard, but if he were to die, I think every saloon in town would close on the day of his funeral."

Nor does the man's ministry stop with municipal boundaries. It goes far and includes in a most remarkable way the cowboys on the ranges. Take you a map of Texas and trace a line off southwestward toward El Paso for six or seven hundred miles till you come upon a county called Jeff Davis, with scraggly mountains marked therein. Those are the Davis mountains, one of the last haunts of the Texas cowboys. Every year for ten years Dr. Truett has been going for a week into this country and engaging with the cowboys in a great religious round-up. The cowboys come, the cattlemen come, and bring their wives—and children come from hundreds of miles round, and sleep out upon the ground in the open air in a nook of the mountains, and twice daily the fiery evangel from Dallas preaches to them the unsearchable riches of the Gospel. Dr. Truett eats their food, he lives their life, he sleeps their sleep on the ground, with only a tarpaulin to cover him. For that week of the year he is their pastor and they are his people. There will be seven or eight hundred of the men and perhaps as many women. It is the great event of their year.

Dr. Truett's own characterization of these people is: "They are unspoiled; they are children of nature; they are artless; they are sincere as the sunlight; they are men of tremendous convictions; they face issues and decide them; they are empire builders." But at the time of the first of these meetings, Dr. Truett was quite unacquainted with the cowboy character. The place of meeting was fifty miles or more from the railroad station. The party which came to escort him consisted of thirty or forty men and a score of women. The train being late, only thirty miles

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was made the first day and they camped at night near the house of a cattleman. The mountain air and the ride had given the preacher a great appetite. He ate enormously, and at its conclusion was indeed too full for any sort of utterance. Yet in the moment of his painful fullness, a deputation of cowboys approached and proposed that he preach to them then and there. The minister was aghast. He not only was in no fit physical condition to preach, but he was utterly at sea as to what to preach. The men had not revealed themselves very clearly to him. He knew he was dealing with a simple-hearted folk, quick to feel affection and quick to take offense, and he did not know much more. The deputation read the minister's consternation on his face.

"Kaynt yo' shoot quick, Parson?" one of them asked, and added thoughtfully, "'cause if yo' kaynt shoot quick, I reckon we all have sent for the wrong parson."

The preacher was on his mettle in an instant.

"Why, yes," he said, "I guess I can shoot quick if you can get me something to shoot at."

"Well," allowed another of the boys, "we all are plumb anxious to be shot full of holes on this yere Gospel proposition—fire away."

But the preacher was still floundering.

"Where can we hold the service?" he asked, looking helplessly round as though a pulpit would suddenly appear out of a clump of cactuses.

This time the knights of the cow country showed their impatience.

"You kin hev the whole range, Parson, plumb from here to the mountings," answered one of them with a wave at an amphitheatre fifty miles square framed in on all sides by the skirts of the hills. The preacher saw he must shoot quick indeed.

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"We'll hold it here," he declared with decision, nodding toward the clump of cottonwood trees beside the house. "The women can sit on the porch. You men can stand up, lean up or sit down as you like."

"That there way o' perceedin' shore suits us plumb up to the hilt," assured the leader of the cowboys as they immediately began to dispose themselves.

"Can you sing?" asked the preacher.

There was much nudging of elbows and finally one of them allowed they had "some words that went purty well with 'A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight.'" The parson thought they would hardly do, however, and proposed "Nearer, My God, to Thee." There was another council among the boys.

"We all allow 'at we can make out to sing that there song fitten to git started with the ropin' and brandin' o' sinners, all right, all right, Parson," was the verdict at the end of it.

So they sang the song, and splendidly, their rich powerful voices swelling up through the branches toward the stars and out over the vast prairie in a way to start the emotions in the breast of the preacher. When they had finished he preached to them of the Love of God. They heard him in silence to the end, a silence that was awed and tense, as out there under the stars they felt themselves in the grip of unseen things. When the sermon was done the preacher saw that the men were in serious mood, and he began to understand them and to feel that they understood him.

If you ever saw cowboys drop off to sleep like logs at the going down of the sun, you will understand how speedily they flung their "tarps" about upon the ground and rolled off to slumber. But while these preparations were going on, two great giants of them, after eyeing the

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preacher narrowly for a long time, approached him and asked:

"Will you take a little *pasear* (walk) with us, Parson? We all have got somethin' to say to you."

Naturally the minister consented. The two men walked ahead of him in solemn silence, yards and yards, and then more yards, till the total must have been more than two hundred—up the trail in the starlight, but all without a word. There was no sound but the far-off cry of a coyote on the hills and the near-by clink of spurs, the scrape of "chaps" and the occasional grating of a boot heel upon a boulder. At length the two solemn-faced men turned about, and one of them pushed up the flap of his hat so the minister saw the shine of his eyes as he said:

"Well, Parson, me and Bill jest wanted to tell you that if you kin keep up this lick of preachin', you all are agoin' to git us converted, shore."

And that was all they had to say. The minister too was scant of words. He just gripped their hands and said: "Boys, I'll do my best."

Solemnly and in silence again he followed them back to the circle of "tarps" about the cottonwoods, and himself lay down—but not to sleep. The experience was too strange. After a while he noticed that the man next him was not sleeping either.

"No," confessed the man, "you shore have banished slumber from my couch this night, Parson. You got me a thinkin', Parson, you shore have."

Scores of conversions resulted from his first week in the cowboys' country.

"Come under to the Mayster," is the expression used by these sons of the saddle to describe conversion. "Master" is always their preferred word for Christ, and in their

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drawling accents they lengthen and depress the vowel until the word sounds as I have spelled it.

On the second or third night of this first meeting, a cowboy named Sam, just getting over delirium tremens, came down the aisle as the evangelistic appeal was being made, and stood before the preacher. He made a sorry picture. His eyes were wildly staring, his hair was disheveled; his mustaches hung disconsolate, one hand twirling nervously at them, while the other nestled restlessly near the butt of the revolver on his hip. The sight of the coming of Sam stirred the audience deeply. And Sam began immediately to speak right out in the meeting:

"Do you mean, Parson," he asked, thickly, "'at if I come under to the Mayster, he will he'p me fight these devils 'at's eatin' me up?" Before the minister could reply scores of cowboys were standing on their feet all about and calling encouragingly: "That's exactly right, Sam." "That shore is right." "You bet your life He will," and expressions of similar import.

And Sam came under to the Mayster, and is today a sober man.

One of the most picturesque of all the big cattlemen of that country was Mr. John Zack Means who owned and operated the Y-6 ranch of over 100,000 acres. Dr. Truett and his family, nearly every summer, spend some days at the Y-6 ranch, usually at the Means ranch-house about six miles from Valentine, a little station on the Southern Pacific Railway.

The cowboys are famous for playing jokes on people. Their idea of humor often calls for rather rough horse-play. Mr. Means was notorious for his so-called practical jokes. On one occasion he and a bunch of his

men were going into San Saba. He conceived the idea of pretending that he was an insane man, as the outfit entered the town. He had the men tie him with stout ropes and chains to the back of the wagon. As they reached the main business street he put on a tremendous performance, shrieking, foaming at the mouth (he had mixed some soap with his chewing tobacco), tugging at his chains, leaping at people who drew near. He lunged at a half-witted fellow of the town who happened to have in his hand a big stick which Mr. Means did not see until too late. The half-wit smashed him over the head with it. When Mr. Means came to, after being soused with cold water, he said, "Untie me, boys. I'm tame now."

On another occasion he took his whole family to San Antonio for the opera season. He, of course, reserved a box near the stage. The opera was *Faust*. It was all very realistic to Mr. Means who had never seen anything like it before. When Faust was just about to betray the beautiful and innocent Marguerite, Mr. Means grew so excited that he leaped to his feet, drew his revolver and shouted, "Lay your hands on her if you dare, and I'll shoot your brains out."

Naturally that broke up that act. Marguerite ran off stage one way and Faust the other.

In spite of all this, Mr. Means was one of the finest and most generous men in all the West. Dr. Truett has counted him and his large family as among his dearest friends. And it was the same with the Evanses, and the Kokernots and many others in the cattle country, too numerous to mention.

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The stories told by Dr. Truett of his experiences among the cowboys never fail to grip and fascinate his audiences, no matter in what part of the world they may be. The first time the writer ever saw or heard of Dr. Truett was in the pulpit of the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, during the 1907 session of the Southern Baptist Convention. At that time Dr. George W. McDaniel, a Texan, was pastor of that church. He had Dr. B. H. Carroll preach at the morning hour and Dr. Truett at the evening hour. The writer was a young practicing attorney in Richmond at that time. I had never heard of either Dr. Carroll or Dr. Truett, until the announcements made by Pastor McDaniel about his fellow-Texans. Dr. Carroll read the Scriptures for thirty minutes and then preached for an hour and fifteen minutes. In spite of the time consumed, the crowded audience sat spell-bound. I marvelled at the man's learning, and his dynamic power in the pulpit.

We wondered that night what the other Texan, George Truett, would be like. Surely he could not measure up to the speaker of the morning. When he came into the pulpit he seemed too tall and slim. He wore a very long, close-fitting Prince Albert coat. His hair was black. His eyes were blue-gray. His voice was pleading and clear as a bell. Impressions of that hour will linger always. Before it was over, I had joined with all the rest of the great audience in their enthusiasm. The preacher's sermon closed with the famous story of Big Jim's conversion at the cowboy camp meeting. Vividly that story is recalled, even now,

virtually as J. A. Lord took it down stenographically in the Fort Worth revival of June 1917, since published.²

May I tell you the most wonderful conversion that I ever witnessed in all my life? Out in the Middle West, where it has been my delight to go many a time, in the out door campmeetings, some years ago I went and found in that particular community some very difficult religious conditions. There were more aged people in that community, unsaved, than I have ever witnessed anywhere in all my life, before or since. The religious conditions of the community were hard and difficult. There had been all sorts of pesky religious debates—how miserable they all are, and how inexcusable!—and the people were set and gritty and hard in their relations toward one another. What a tragedy when that is so! I was there some two or three days, and more and more it dawned upon me how difficult all the conditions were. They told me daily about those white-haired men and women, who went groping life's way, without God and without hope.

After some days, they told me about Big Jim, the most difficult sinner, they said, west of Fort Worth, even as far west as El Paso. They so described him physically that I could not miss him if he came to the meeting, and they said: "He will come one time to hear you, and then he will swear at you, and rail at you, and curse out the whole meeting, and the preachers and the churches and everybody, and then he will wait a year and come back a year from now to go over the same performance again." That was their report of him. I stood up to preach one evening and in came Big Jim. I could not miss him, from their description. Yonder he sat, far down the aisle before me,

² In *A Quest for Souls* published in 1917 by J. B. Cranfill. Permission to reprint granted.

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at the rear of the great arbor, nor did he take his eye, it seemed, one time from the minister, while his message was being given. At the close of the message, I made the call for men and women who would then and there humbly and honestly make surrender of their poor, undone and sinful lives to the forgiving mercy and help of the Divine Savior, and down every aisle white-haired men and women came. It was one of those memorable nights, never to be forgotten. Big Jim kept his seat, nor did he seem to move. After awhile, the meeting ended, and the people gathered about me, or gathered in little groups to discuss the wonders that their eyes had witnessed that night. One after another was named who had "come over the line" and made the great surrender that night to Jesus. And then, ever and anon, these talkers would make a passing remark about the presence of Big Jim, and they speculated about his presence, and about the possibility of his coming any more. One said: "No; he will not be back. He will swear at our preacher, and at all the Christian people, nor will he return until next year." But another said: "Yes, he had a different look on him tonight from what I have ever seen before. I look for him to come again. Never did I see him look as he looked tonight." And so they talked pro and con.

Presently the preacher slipped away from the crowd, for it was late, and wended his way around the hillside to the little cottage, far removed from the camping throngs, where he might have quiet and rest, and as he went around that little mountain side he heard somebody talking. Oh, it was so earnest! The preacher did not mean to be an eavesdropper, and yet he seemed chained in his very tracks. And when he stopped and listened to that strange talk, he discovered in a moment what it was, and that there were

two of them, and that they were praying, for one, who spoke for the two, said: "We two, O Christ, agree we want Big Jim saved, that the mouths of gainsayers may be stopped in this country. They are saying, O Christ, that Big Jim is too much for God, that even God cannot stop him. They are saying that, and we want the mouths of gainsayers stopped, and the whole land to know that Christ is able to save even the chief of sinners; and we two, here on the mountain side, late in the night, give thee Big Jim, believing thy great promise: 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' For the glory of Christ, simply and only, we pray you, save Big Jim."

I went quietly on my way. I do not know who they were, who thus were praying. I never knew. I found my cottage, and the night passed, and the next day came and wore to night-fall, and I was again under the arbor, facing the mass of people. I stood up to preach and looked everywhere, but Big Jim was not present. But just as I began to speak, in he came, at the same place as on the previous night, and then my message seemed to fly away, and I said: "We will pause and ask God to give the preacher what he ought to say. He does not know. He would speak God's message, whatever it is, to-night, and this man will lead us in prayer that the preacher may speak what, and as, Christ would have His preacher to-night to speak."

And the prayer was finished, and then the preacher began again, and told simply and only that story of the prodigal son, the easily influenced, impulsive youth, restless, dissatisfied, who went away from home against the protests of wisdom and love, and took his part of the inheritance, and went down the toboggan slide at a rapid pace, and wasted all his substance in riotous living. And

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when his substance was gone, his friends were gone. The hail-fellows-well-met of the other days had fled, and he was down yonder in the swine fields, this lad, feeding the swine, himself eating of the husks wherewith he fed the swine. One day, as the Scriptures tell the story, the young fellow "came to himself." He saw himself as he was. Memory was alert, and the months and the years of his separation from home, came, trooping back to his recollection, and the young man said: "I have sinned. I have missed it. This is the way of defeat and death. I will go back to father, and I will confess in his sight and in God's sight how I have missed it, and how I have sinned." And then he put that kindling desire into effect, that sublime resolution into action, and he betook himself back the homeward way, and as he came toward the old home, the father saw him, even from afar; the father was waiting, longing to see him; and down the road the father came, and put his arms about the boy, as the boy began his confession, and the father called to a servant: "Bring the best robe for this boy," and to another: "Kill the fatted calf," and to another: "Bring the ring to put on this boy's finger," emblem of the love that never dies. And there was music, and there was rejoicing, and there was victory. That was all I said, except that I added: "This story of the prodigal son is simply a picture of the love of God, going out after any soul on earth that has wandered away from God, which soul God wishes to forgive and recover and save, and will so save, if such soul will come to Him." And then I said: "Will the audience remain seated? Without any singing at all, is there some man here tonight, a prodigal, far from heaven and God, who says: 'I want God's mercy, and I will honestly yield myself to God to get it?' Let him come and take my hand."

Would you believe it? Big Jim started. Oh, the sight,

the sight, the sight! And presently the men saw him coming, and hundreds of sobbing men stood to their feet, and sobbed aloud, and as he came down the aisle slowly, for it was with difficulty he walked, hundreds of men joined him, and came down with him. And when at last he got to me and took my hand, he said: "Sir, I put you on your sacred honor, will the Great Master save me, if I will give up to Him?" And I said: "Sir, on my sacred honor, I declare that He will, if you will just honestly surrender your case to Him." And the men put in with voices, scores and scores: "It is so, Jim. We made the surrender and He saved us. You make it, and you will find out for yourself." And then again, waiting a moment, he looked at me, still holding my hand, and said: "I want you to remember, sir, that you are speaking to the worst man out of perdition. Would the Master save a man like that, if he would give up to Him?" I said: "Sir, on my Master's own statement, I declare to you that He will save you, even if you are the chief sinner out of perdition, if you will honestly surrender to Him." And they punctuated my remark with a chorus: "It is so, Jim. Try it and you will find out." Once again he looked at me and then he said finally: "Sir, when would the Great Master save me, if I should give up to Him right now?" And I said: "Sir, on His own word, which many of us have proved, our Great Master will save you, and your heart shall know that your sins are forgiven, right now, if right now you will honestly surrender to Him." And then he turned that big bronzed face upward, as if looking for the Master himself, and he gasped out his prayer, just this: "Lord Jesus, the worst man in the world gives up to you right now."

Oh, I cannot tell the rest! I do not think the angels could tell the rest. I think if the archangel himself should come

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down from those starry heights, that the words of that angel would be inadequate to tell you the rest. God unloosed Big Jim's tongue, and he began to talk, and then the old men kissed him, and the old women kissed him, and the young men kissed him, and the young women kissed him, for the chief of sinners had been saved.³

In recent years the cattle business of West Texas has suffered severely and many of the big operators have gone bankrupt. But during their prosperous years they were liberal in their gifts to Christian causes, especially those causes presented to them by their preacher-friend from Dallas. Dr. Truett has been privileged to lead hundreds and hundreds of those people of the plains to Christ. And all the while he has sought to develop in them a sense of Christian stewardship. He has often related the following story which well illustrates the fine way in which some of these big men responded to his teachings.

I go every year to the cattlemen of the West, to their annual camp meeting, and have been thus going to them, for a week every year, for fifteen years. The most interesting week I ever live, in some respects, is that week; and among the most interesting men—the biggest, the finest, in many respects, that I have ever touched, are those stalwart men.

Sometime ago, when I was out there, I preached to those men, some 1200 hidden away in a cove of the mountains, one morning, on the text: "Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body,

³ From *A Quest for Souls*, reprinted by permission of the publisher, J. B. Cranfill.

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and in your spirit, which are God's." One of those big fellows who heard that day had not been a Christian long. When the service was over he locked his arm in mine and said: "Let's go for a walk. I have something serious to say to you." We went up the canyon, about a mile and a quarter away from the camp. After we started, he did not say another word for quite awhile. His great chest rose and fell, as if some seething furnace were beneath it, as, indeed there was. I waited for him to speak; I did not venture to question him at all. When we were a mile and a quarter away from the camp, behind a large ledge of rock, he turned and faced me, and said: "I want you to pray a dedicatory prayer for me." "What do you wish to dedicate?" I asked. Slowly he began to talk, and the tears began to stream from his eyes, and he said: "I did not know until this morning that all these thousands of cattle that I have called mine are not mine at all, but every one belongs to Christ. I did not know until this morning that all these miles and miles of lands over which my cattle have grazed are not mine at all, but that every acre belongs to Christ. You see, I have not been a Christian long, and I do not know much about the Christian life. I have learned today, as never before, what the Christian life means. Now I see that every hoof of all these thousands of cattle belongs to Christ, and every acre of all these lands over which they range belongs to Christ, and I want to take my true place in God's cause. I want you to tell God for me that I will be His trustee from this day on. I will be His administrator on His estate. I will try to live from now on like such an administrator ought to live. And when you finish telling Him that for me, you wait. I have got something to tell Him myself."

We knelt there behind the rock, like two children, and

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I said: "Master, this man bids me tell thee thus and so, thus and so." And he assented and consented, while I spoke the sentences to God. When I had finished I waited, and he put his face down to the ground and sobbed. I waited and waited, and on and on he sobbed, and presently he gasped out his prayer. It was this: "And now, Master," he said, "am I not in a position to give you my bad boy? His mother and I seem to have no influence at all over him, but I have given you my property today, and I will, from now on, be your administrator on your estate. And now, won't you take my boy in the same way, and save him, and save him soon, for your glory?"

We went back to the camp, and the day wore to evening, and I stood up again to preach to the men. Nor had I spoken fifteen minutes until that wild son, on the outskirts of that crowd, stood up before us all, came toward his father sitting there at the front, and as he came and as we looked, he said: "Father, I cannot wait until that man is done his sermon. I have decided for Christ!" And this Scripture, that hour, was plain to our hearts: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Oh, what power a man has with God, when such man comes to Christ and says to Him: "You can get me for any field, for any journey, for any task, for any duty that you wish. Master, I am yours—to go and to say and to be and to do, just as thou wilt." What a power he has in the world!

The first big enterprise engaged in by Dr. Truett after becoming pastor of Dallas, which called for large sums of money, was the launching of the Texas Baptist Memorial Sanitarium at Dallas, later known as Baylor Hospital. For about two years Dr. Truett gave much

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time to trips and speeches, expounding the value of this project. Ground was broken for the first building in November, 1904, by Colonel C. C. Slaughter, from whom Dr. Truett secured a large initial gift for the hospital.

Baylor Hospital was a forerunner of a chain of twenty-six hospitals opened and operated by Southern Baptists, just as Hiawassee Academy in Georgia was the forerunner of a great chain of mountain schools operated by them. George Truett pioneered in both these fields of notable Christian service by Baptists. Baylor Hospital became the nucleus around which was formed the greatest medical center of the Southwest.

From the beginning Pastor Truett has been the prime mover and stalwart supporter of the vast enterprise known as "Baylor in Dallas." As a direct result of his influence nearly three million dollars have been contributed to it. In 1904 he inspired Colonel Slaughter and others of his well-to-do friends with enthusiasm for it; but in 1904, neither he nor they could possibly have foreseen what their hospital venture would grow into.

Many of the cattlemen from West Texas gave generously through the years to Baylor Hospital. They not only sent money to the hospital, but also to Buckner Orphan's Home, to Baylor University at Waco, and to other special enterprises in which Pastor Truett was interested. Later, when numbers of these people became wealthy from oil holdings they remembered Pastor Truett's teachings on Christian stewardship.

Growing Fame

THUS FAR in the life-story of George Truett mention has been made of only three of his public appearances outside of Texas after he became a preacher. These were the address at Norfolk, Virginia (1898), the Convention Sermon at Louisville, Kentucky (1899) and the sermon in the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia (1907). In Texas ever since his student days at Grayson College his fame had constantly grown. He was in frequent demand for revival meetings and for addresses on special occasions in his adopted state.

Through all the years of his ministry at Dallas his church has been most generous in sharing him with others. In recent years, fully one third of his time has been given to "kingdom service" outside his own church.

As early as 1900 his services as pastor-evangelist began to be sought on every side, not only in Texas but in other states as well. For many years now he has had to decline far more invitations to hold revival services than he could accept. Frequently, he is scheduled for such meetings as much as two years ahead. They are never long meetings—a week, or ten days, or two weeks at the most. Often he has been urged to go to

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some metropolitan center and continue revival services there for a month or six weeks, or even longer, his sermons being broadcast over some national radio system. Many of his friends and associates have thought such protracted and concentrated effort might result in the long-predicted and often-prayed-for modern American revival. But, thus far, he has never commanded the time necessary for such extended evangelistic effort. Christian leaders in several of America's great cities have seriously discussed the possibilities of securing Dr. Truett for a revival meeting of the above type. For some years the importance of such revival services in some suitable center has been urged upon Dr. Truett. However, in all the forty odd years of his ministry, he has never continued in a revival service more than two weeks. Always he has had to leave for the duties of his own pastorate just when the evangelistic fires seemed about to spread.

Brief evangelistic meetings have been conducted by him in many cities of the North and West, including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Detroit, Indianapolis, Cleveland, St. Louis, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Washington, Los Angeles; and in practically all the leading cities of the South. Rarely are they ever more than ten days in length. Invitations for such meetings began to reach him when he had been at Dallas only a few years, and they have continued to come with ever increasing frequency. Volumes of surpassing interest could be written on Dr. Truett's experiences in these revival services. Two typical incidents which found their way into his subsequent

sermons or conversations will suffice to shed light on his methods of dealing with individuals and their spiritual problems.

I was once in a meeting in New York state. After the sermon I stood at the door to greet the people as they passed into the inquiry room. Among others, there came one evening an attractive looking man, perhaps thirty-six years of age, who tarried at the door to speak to me, as others passed in. He said: "Well, sir, I do not believe a word you said tonight." I replied: "Then, pray, why do you tarry? My invitation was for serious people, for men and women in earnest, for those with a sincere desire to find light and to get help. Why do you tarry?" "Oh," he said, "I thought I would like to see you at close range, and to hear what you say to people in an inquiry room, and so I have come along."

I felt that I could see under the surface an interest deeper than his words indicated. Therefore I said: "You tarry, and when the others are gone, I should like to have some words with you alone." He remained, and when all the others had left, I asked him: "What really brought you into this place? What gave you these doubts concerning religion? I think you are more serious than your words spoken to me at the door would indicate."

Then he told me a story that I have neither the time nor the inclination here to repeat, except to say that he was the son of a minister in old Virginia. He was reared as a boy ought to be reared and yet he had gone far away from all that rearing, during the fifteen years he had been away from home.

"If these things I preached to you and the people tonight are true, wouldn't you like to know the truth of it

all?" I asked. He made quick response: "Certainly, I should like to know the truth of it all." "You can know it," I assured him. "Here is the challenge of Jesus: 'If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God.' As I speak to your father's God and to my God, I will ask Him just to lead you on, and to fill you with desire and purpose to follow His leading." And thus I prayed.

When I had finished my prayer, as we were bowed there at our chairs, I said: "Let us remain bowed, and you try for a moment to pray." He was startled and said: "Why, man, I would not know how to begin. I have not tried even in a dozen years." Think of a man going a dozen years without calling on God! It seems impossible. I answered: "Then I will frame a sentence for you, just as I would for my little child, and you say it after me."

And so I did, and he repeated it, and I framed a second sentence, and he repeated that, and a third sentence, and he repeated that. Then I paused and said: "Prayer is the sanest thing in the world. Prayer is the outcry of a little, needy, finite, mortal being, to a great, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, all-merciful Being. Tell Him what you would like. Tell Him as you would tell a man something you should tell him, without any reserve."

Timidly, haltingly, he began his prayer. In a moment or two his words came faster. Soon his sentences were rushing like a torrent. He was confessing his sins. He was bewailing his dreadful decline, and memory was burning like a fire, and it blazed and burned, as he recalled his home, the family prayer, and his father as a preacher, and his mother singing the simple songs of faith. And he continued: "I remember, Lord, the last sermon I heard father preach. He preached on the prayer of the publican: 'God

be merciful to me, a sinner.' That is *my* prayer. Be merciful to me, a sinner. I give up to thee. Help me, a poor sinner!"

For a moment or two he was quiet. Then he arose to his feet. I looked up at him and waited for him to make his pronouncement. He looked down earnestly at me, stretched out his hand to me and said, "I have found the light!"

Of course, he had found the light. Any man on earth who will take the right attitude toward Jesus shall be brought into the light—the marvelous light of the Son of God.

Dwight L. Moody when asked, "How may Christ's people reach the masses with the gospel?" replied, "Go after them, one by one." The following incident shows how responsive Dr. Truett is to the reactions of individuals in his audiences and the lengths to which he will go to reach just one from among the thousands who face him.

I was preaching in a series of meetings in one of our cities some time ago. I noticed a boy of about sixteen years of age who came for three consecutive nights and at the close of each service lifted his hand for prayer. Then another evening came, and there he was, but he made no response and indeed seemed indifferent. I could read it in his face. When the service was concluded I hurried to the back of the auditorium and fortunately found the boy and drew him aside so that we could have a word alone.

"I have seen you in the audience," I began. "For two or three evenings you indicated that you wished to be a

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Christian and now tonight you have said by your face and your conduct that you are indifferent. What has happened?"

He looked up into my face somewhat plaintively. "I was interested," he said. "I was deeply concerned by what you said. I did tell you that I wanted to be a Christian, and I meant it, but now I have decided differently. I think I had rather not tell you why."

"My boy," I answered, "I should not like to take any advantage of you at all. I do not wish to be impertinent but I should like to know what has come to turn you back from the open gate to the better life. I should like to know what it is so that I may help you."

"Then I will tell you," answered the lad frankly. "My father is Dr. ——. He never goes to church. I never heard of his being in church in all my life. My father is the most splendid man in all the world. He is the cleverest man I know and the strongest man. I am going to follow my father."

I urged him to come on to the services. But my sleep was troubled that night. When morning came I went immediately to the office of the father and introduced myself.

The doctor faced me with an interested, kindly look. "Certainly, you have not come about yourself. You are evidently not a sick man," he said.

"I have not come about myself at all," I replied. "I have come to have a word with you about your own boy."

Then I told him of our conversation the night before. "Your boy has definitely decided to turn away from the call of Christ and the Christian religion and to follow you instead," I concluded. "I have come just to tell you that and to ask if you do not have too much involved to let the matter stand like that."

His face was colorless as he said, "That is the heaviest blow I ever received." Then he asked, "When is your next service?" There was new strength and purpose in his face when I left him. "I will give this matter immediate attention," he promised. "I will be at your service tonight."

The day wore on to nightfall and I stood up to preach, and my eyes searched the press of people everywhere. At last I saw the doctor—an usher was giving him a chair far to the rear. That evening I preached to one man. When I had finished, I simply asked the question: "Is there a man here tonight who, on high principle, for his own sake first, and then for the sake of someone sheltering behind him, will here and now give his heart to Christ?"

Promptly that father arose, came down the aisle and took my hand in token of his surrender to Christ. Something like an electric thrill went through the audience because everybody there seemed to know him and profoundly respect him. As he clasped my hand he said: "My boy got me. What you told me about my boy this morning got me. When you left me, I shut the door and locked it, and I knelt down in my room and tried to pray, as I have not done in years. I said: 'Oh, God, forgive me, for not only have I been staying out of the kingdom of God myself, but I have been keeping my own boy out also. Forgive me, Oh, God! Here and now I turn my case over to Christ, the Great Physician, that he may forgive me and save me in his own way.'"

Then it was that I interrupted him to say: "Look, Doctor, behind you." And there, standing behind him, was that handsome boy, who impulsively threw his arms around his father's neck, as the tears coursed down his cheeks. I heard him say: "Oh, Father, I am so glad you came. I wanted to come to Christ, but I waited for you. Now, both of us will follow him."

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The two incidents above, narrated by Dr. Truett, are quite typical of things which are frequently occurring in his ministry. They could be multiplied indefinitely. Even from the earliest days of his ministry young and old, high and low, rich and poor, prominent and obscure have joyously and sincerely, thrillingly accepted and confessed Christ and promptly begun to "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." Quickly, reports of the whole-hearted response of saints and sinners alike to his preaching spread all over the land; and churches and pastors and schools everywhere began to seek him for special services. During the forty-two years since he first began at Dallas he has gone for such special services to perhaps as many as a thousand places. At the time of the fortieth anniversary of his pastorate at Dallas, he was heard to say that he had averaged a sermon or an address a day for forty years.

As already indicated, schools of all types began to seek his services early in his ministry and they have never let up in their urgent invitations to him, many of which he has accepted. These invitations have been for evangelistic meetings on the campus, baccalaureate sermons, convocation and commencement addresses on practically every college and university campus in the Southwest, and hundreds of others all over the nation. Among these may be mentioned Colgate University, University of Chicago, Leland Stanford, State Universities of Texas, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama; and church affiliated schools, like Baylor University, Mercer, Wake Forest, Union University (Tenn.),

Furman, Mississippi College, Louisiana College, and Oklahoma Baptist University.

This gracious letter from Dr. George H. Denny of the University of Alabama is typical of many others from school authorities expressing appreciation of Dr. Truett and his ministries to educational institutions.

MY DEAR DR. JAMES:

I am greatly delighted to hear that you are preparing an authorized biography of Dr. Truett. . . .

I regard Dr. Truett as the greatest preacher of evangelical religion of this generation. I make no exception. Six years ago the University of Alabama in celebrating its centennial invited Dr. Truett to preach the centennial sermon. We did this for the simple reason that we ranked him first among the evangelical preachers of the country.

I have heard Dr. Truett on many occasions. I marvel at his power. He is a veritable master of assemblies. Sound in his theology, he is faultless in his diction. His homiletic skill is nothing short of amazing. His rare voice and impressive personality are unexcelled. He grips men and women, old and young. He is the ideal preacher.

I have read the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, of Spurgeon, of Phillips Brooks, of Moody, and of other pulpiteers who have taken first rank in their day; I class Dr. Truett as the equal of any of them. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to conceive how any human being could preach with greater conviction and unction.

In preparing your biography of this prince of preachers, I urge that a companion volume containing typical, representative sermons be likewise published. His sermons should be preserved. They represent the best type of evangelical pulpit appeal produced in the last quarter of a

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century and are unsurpassed by any type produced at any time in any part of the English-speaking world.

This simple statement represents the sincere estimate of a Presbyterian layman whose career has been greatly influenced by Dr. Truett's almost super-human appeal.

Faithfully yours,

GEORGE H. DENNY

Chancellor

He has been a favorite with theological seminaries and repeatedly has given series of addresses at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, the Southwestern Seminary at Fort Worth, and the Baptist Bible Institute at New Orleans.

During the early years of his ministry Dr. Truett preached the Convention Sermon for the International Sunday School Convention meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, and spoke daily at the worship hour of that Convention. As a result his fame as a preacher was spread throughout the Sunday School circles of North America. Some years later he delivered the Convention Sermon for the International Student Volunteer Convention in Des Moines, Iowa, at which time he greatly enjoyed fellowship with Dr. Robert E. Speer and with the presiding officer, Dr. John R. Mott, and was profoundly impressed with the masterful personalities of these two "world citizens." It was also during these early years that he spoke daily at the B. Y. P. U. Convention in Saratoga Springs, New York, and formed many life-long friendships among the Baptist young people of that generation.

Through the years, Dr. Truett has often been

guest speaker at non-Baptist gatherings including: The Presbyterian Assembly, U. S. A., the International Convention of Disciples, the South-wide Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the National Boy Scouts Conference and the Winona Lake Conference.

For some years Dr. Truett has gone to the Southern Baptist Assembly at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, for what is called "Preaching Week," which comes in August at the close of the summer program. Under the management of the Baptist Sunday School Board, this has become one of the largest religious assemblies in America. Twice daily for eight days, Dr. Truett preaches to vast throngs. His audiences are made up of people from many states of the Union, including thousands from the mountain sections of his beloved North Carolina. He always looks forward eagerly to the days at Ridgecrest.

Nineteen hundred to nineteen hundred and seventeen were the years in which George Truett became a national figure: a preacher whose fame had spread beyond the bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention, beyond the bounds of his own Baptist denomination in the United States and Canada. Baptists of virtually all English speaking countries, and religious leaders of other communions in many lands, had come to think of him as one of the outstanding preachers of America, a leader of fraternal and cooperative spirit who exercised an almost magical power over people wherever he went. Explanation was constantly made that the secret of his power was his ability to touch the

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emotional life of his auditors whenever he spoke. But as the years passed it began to be generally recognized that George Truett had much more than merely an emotional appeal; that he also challenged the intellectual, moral, esthetic, patriotic, and social senses of people in every walk and station of life.

It was during this period that special correspondents for national publications began to travel to Dallas to find out more about the pastor of the First Baptist Church of that city, and to report their findings in feature articles, read by millions all over the nation. The man at the corner drug store of America's "Main Street," as well as the housewife on the far-away farm, learned the name and somewhat of the fame of one George W. Truett of Dallas, Texas.

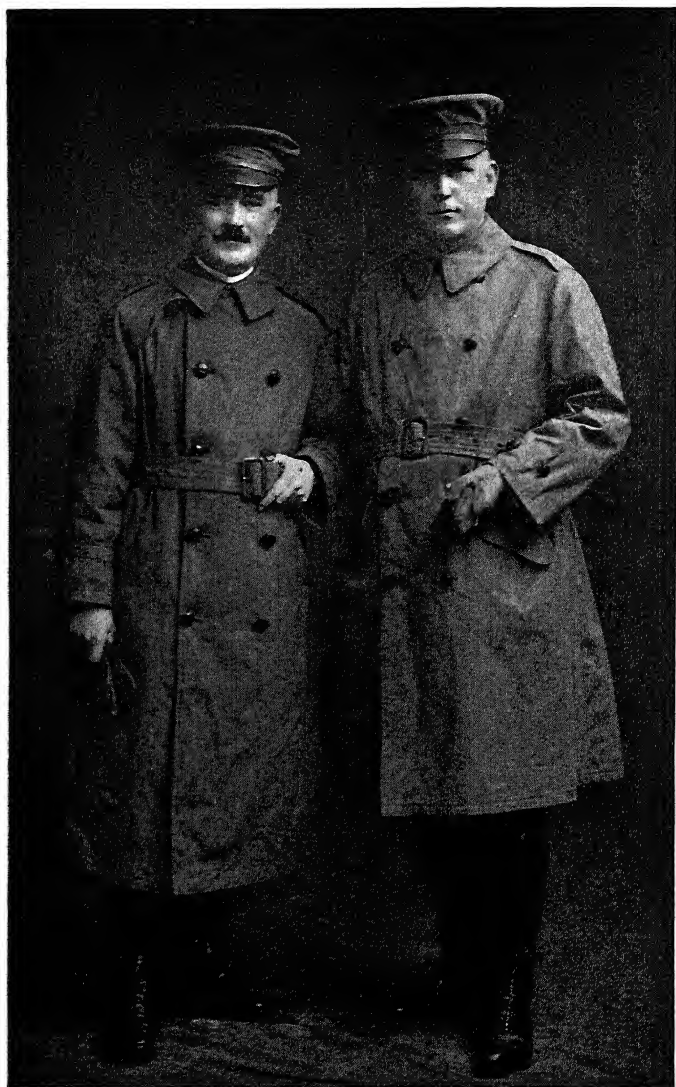
On May 23, 1902, he delivered an address in St. Paul, Minnesota, at the annual meeting of the American Baptist Publication Society. The subject of this address, which was given wide circulation by the Publication Society, was *The Leaf and the Life*. By "The Leaf" he, of course, meant the printed page. This address is to be found in his volume entitled, *God's Call to America*.¹

George Truett had been out of college only five years when he delivered this address on *The Leaf and the Life*, which clearly revealed how widely read a man he was even at that time. It shows that he was thoroughly at home in a surprisingly wide range of subjects: history, biography, poetry, drama, and other forms of world literature. Seldom has the power of

¹ Published in 1923 by *The Judson Press*.



Robert (Bob) Coleman, a layman assistant to
Dr. Truett since 1904



James A. Francis, of Los Angeles, and George Truett,
in France during the World War

the printed page had a more convincing presentation than that which is found in this address.

The only hobby of George Truett's life has been books. He never has been able to resist the temptation to buy them, so long as he had the funds. One side of his Dallas home looks more like a public library than a private residence. Three rooms on the ground floor are stacked with books from the floor to the ceiling—good books on almost every conceivable subject, nearly ten thousand of them, this in spite of the fact that he is constantly giving books to others, especially to preachers and young people who will probably be helped by such reading. Frequently he buys them as soon as they are on sale and later receives complimentary copies of the same books from the authors or the publishers.

Dr. Truett reads with amazing rapidity and with a photographic eye. During a day's journey on a train he will read three or four books and his mind will be permanently stored with the essence of each of them. He would no more think of starting on a trip without books than he would start without his watch or his coat. Books are essential to his very existence.

From his youth, George Truett has lived with the printed page—above all else, the printed pages of the Scriptures. Few men have more comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the Bible than he. One of the outstanding features of his preaching is the readiness, the accuracy and the frequency with which, with startling effectiveness, he quotes the Scriptures.

But he is a man of many books. He has lived with

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"the timeless ones," who have blessed the world with imperishable thoughts and deeds. As one listens to his sermons and addresses, or reads them, he is constantly surprised at this exceedingly busy man's detailed familiarity with many subjects. Take, for example, the fifty minute address on *The Leaf and the Life*, referred to above. In the course of this address on the power of the printed page, he makes apt and unlabored reference to more than fifty famous historical and literary personages and events. Of course, the nature of this particular speech more or less calls for such references and justifies their use. Yet it seems hardly credible that as many literary and historical allusions as this could be incorporated without strain into one speech of reasonable length. And yet the speaker in this case seems on such familiar terms with all these people and events that their inclusion in his address appears not only natural and logical but always in excellent taste.

Even in the earlier years of his ministry, George Truett disclosed a cultural knowledge which could have come only from a wide acquaintance with the works of many of the great writers of the world. And the passing years have immeasurably added to his familiarity with the great thoughts and writings of the centuries and to his ability to command their best in the service of his gospel ministry.

Builders of cathedrals delight to adorn their structures with the carved figures of famous or sainted people. Not so with George Truett. He calls upon poets and statesmen, historians and biographers, scientists

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and soldiers, musicians and merchants, saints and sinners, and lets them help him build his sermons.

Because of his surpassing ability to touch human hearts and stir their deepest emotions almost at will, many people were slow to realize that George Truett's appeal to the intellect and the will was hardly less powerful than his appeal to the heart. However, this realization has steadily grown and has added to his fame and influence.

Service Over-seas

GEORGE TRUETT had been at Dallas seventeen years when the storm of the World War burst upon the world in August, 1914. This unprecedented catastrophe shocked him as it did all thinking people. At first he, like the great majority of Americans, sought to maintain a neutral attitude towards the great struggle. The belief was widespread in the United States that none of the contestants were blameless, that all of them were guilty of the sins of extreme selfishness and national imperialism, shot through and through with godless materialism. But as the terrible drama unfolded, as the Central Powers disclosed their ruthless policies and frightful practices on land and sea, George Truett, like millions of other Americans, found himself inevitably forced into an ever deepening sympathy with Belgium, France and England and the other Allied Powers.

Long before Congress declared war against the Central Powers, Dr. Truett had sensed the inevitable course America would take. Many of his sermons and addresses, for months preceding the declaration of war, contained passages which clearly showed to his auditors that his very soul was being deeply moved by the march of events. When finally war was declared he

was one of the most outspoken ministers in the nation in his pronouncements on the issues involved. Many an audience was electrified by his statements as to certain things worth living for, fighting for, dying for. Baptists have ever been lovers of freedom—religious, political, social, economic freedom. Their doctrines make them so. In every age since they have been a distinctive people they have been willing to fight for freedom of conscience and liberty of soul for others as well as for themselves.

George Truett inherited the Baptist love of freedom and he has been one of its most consistent and eloquent advocates. By the time America entered the war his voice was reaching not only Texas and the South but a large part of the entire nation.

Journalists of national reputation, including George W. Gray and Peter Clark Macfarlane, had visited Dallas and his church in order to interview him and hear him preach, and write feature articles about him for such publications as *Collier's Weekly* and the *American Magazine*. Multitudes of people who never had seen him or heard him speak, thus learned who he was and something of what he stood for in the American pulpit.

Therefore it was not at all surprising that when President Wilson came to select twenty of the outstanding preachers of America to go overseas "to deliver their messages of patriotism and religion to the Allied armies," George W. Truett was one of the number. They went under the egis of the Y. M. C. A. This notable group of men sailed from New York in

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the early summer of 1918. The *Baptist Courier* of South Carolina carried this news item:¹

Dr. George W. Truett, of Dallas, Texas, goes to France to labor with our soldiers for a period of six months or more. He goes under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A., but his salary and expenses will be borne by his own church. The Y. M. C. A. leaders selected twenty or more of the leading pastors in the United States and have appealed to their churches to release them for a season for religious work over the seas. We are not surprised that Dr. Truett was one of those selected for this service and we rejoice that he found it possible to accept the work. No man of our acquaintance is better fitted to minister to our soldiers and none will be heard with deeper interest by them.

A Dallas daily published a letter from H. G. Elliott of Atlanta, Georgia, who saw Dr. Truett in New York just prior to sailing, in which he said:

Dr. Truett addressed a body of Y. M. C. A. men who are ready to go to France, at Aeolian Hall, New York, on July 28th. Dr. Truett held the audience spell-bound with his eloquence and the men in his contingent are elated over the prospect of serving with such an able man. It was great to see Dr. Truett in uniform. He is going over soon and will stay six months. He is certainly a wonderful man.

The time of their departure and the identity of the American troops with whom they sailed, was kept a secret lest the German submarine commanders learn of it. Dr. Truett has often said that it was the most exciting voyage he ever took.

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When the group landed in the British Isles the members were shown every possible courtesy. They were the guests of the British government and were shown much of England's vast war establishment so that they might be in a position to tell the American people how England was expending every ounce of her energy to win the war. Britain desired that the United States might know from the lips of some of their own most trustworthy citizens just how "the tight little island" was placing her all on the sacrificial altar.

Dr. Truett's assistant in Dallas, Robert H. Coleman, about this time received a letter of appreciation from Dr. John Wilson of London, which appeared in the *Dallas News*, as follows: ²

An appreciation of Dr. George W. Truett, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, who is now overseas preaching to the soldiers, has been received by Robert H. Coleman, Dr. Truett's assistant, from Dr. John Wilson of London, England, who was in the United States some years ago on a tour.

Mr. Coleman says that from this letter his opinion is verified to the effect that Dr. Truett has not been writing even to his family of many courtesies being shown him. The information came that Dr. Truett, with Dr. James A. Francis, Dr. Shields and Dr. Hoyt were being shown "all our war effort that they may be able to explain to the United States and Canada what the Motherland has done in this hour of crisis."

"Today they are in Ireland," the letter continued, "to gain firsthand knowledge of the Irish problem. Dr. Truett

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was invited to breakfast with the Prime Minister, but the breakfast was postponed on account of the breakdown of the health of the Prime Minister during his visit to Manchester."

Continuing, Dr. Wilson wrote:

"I hope to go in the strength of this morning's manna more than forty days. My nature at first began to try and penetrate that strong face. I looked carefully—is he a pre-millennarian or post-millennarian? And it was not long before I discovered that he was greater than both. It was the greatest address that I have ever heard or want to hear. Dr. Truett brought an Atlantic roller, which, with rapture, thrilled our hearts. I know now that what the old negro said of Lincoln as he entered Richmond at its capture, 'He walks the earth like the dear Lord himself,' is true of other men."

To his wife Dr. Truett wrote at this time:

Tonight I spoke in a hospital—Canadian—that has some American boys. The chapel, holding perhaps 1,000, was packed, and oh, they did give me such a welcome, some with only one hand, some with one foot, and some with one eye, etc. Never, never can I get away from the impressions of such a visit. I saw them unloading a trainload of new arrivals of wounded. The sight of it all is seared into my brain, I think, forever.

I talked to one of them—to one from El Paso, who enlisted long ago with Canada, because his heart was so stirred; to another from California and another from Iowa, a curly-haired, sweet-faced boy of nineteen. I fairly took him into my arms and petted and loved him, and he so clung to me. They were so brave and uncomplaining!

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Surely, surely I shall know better than ever to be a murmurer any more about the little things, when men by myriads are dying without a murmur for me, and my family, and my country, and for liberty and civilization.

They were so appreciative of my address that it compelled me to put on all the brakes to keep from sobbing like a child. When I paid the best tribute of my heart to the fine array of nurses present, they put down their heads and brushed away their tears, while the wounded patients wildly cheered. The nurses were so cleanly and modest-looking and beautiful. I fancy that these boys will fall head over heels in love with them. And the fine, self-controlled, considerate, gentle doctors—how they provoked my admiration!

After I had finished my address, and they had shown it such appreciation and were dismissed, they threw on the screen President Wilson's picture, for my benefit. Wasn't that delicate and beautiful? I rose and saluted and all of us cheered like schoolboys. Never, never can I get away from this evening. I could wish that I were a thousand men, that I might tarry beside every boy for a personal interview.

On several occasions Dr. Truett visited Eagle Hut, the famous Y. M. C. A. cantonment in London. There they told him the story of the big Texas rookie who met King George and Queen Mary. One evening the King and Queen visited Eagle Hut to eat "hot cakes" with the American boys. A big, raw-boned private from Texas arrived at the Hut after royalty had been served and was told by some of the boys outside that he had missed the only chance he would probably ever have of seeing a real king and queen. He asked, "Are

they still in there?" Being told that they were, he said, "Sure I'm not only going to see 'em, I'm going to meet 'em." Whereupon he strode into the Hut and straight up to King George and said, "Are you King George?" Looking somewhat surprised, the king replied, "Yes, I am King George." "Well," said the big rookie, "I just wanted to meet you and your wife, so I could tell the folks back in Texas that I met two of the biggest shots in the whole outfit over here." And sticking out his great paw of a hand, he said, "Put her there, George! Shake!"

And King George was sporting enough to "put her there," as he shook hands with the giant from Texas and smilingly said, "I am happy to meet you. And this is my wife, Queen Mary."

Then the big fellow noticed some peculiar expressions on the faces of the American and British officers in the group and it suddenly dawned on him that perhaps he had made some sort of a social error and so he drifted over to the hot-cake counter and ordered two "stacks" and a quart of coffee to cover up his embarrassment.

Dr. Truett and his constant traveling companion, Dr. James A. Francis, the brilliant and witty Baptist pastor from Los Angeles, California, himself a red-headed Irishman, were invited by the British authorities to visit Ireland and form their own first-hand impressions of the ever-present "Irish problem" which was giving the English much concern during war days. Dr. Francis felt quite at home in Ireland but it all seemed very strange to Dr. Truett. They had many

interesting and some very amusing experiences in the Emerald Isle.

In a conference with a group of Irish leaders, Dr. Francis said to one of the most noted Irish members of Parliament, a man who had given His Majesty's Government many an anxious hour, "What would you Irishmen do if just for once you could settle all your differences among yourselves and all your quarrels with England could be composed?"

"In that case," said the Irish leader, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "the Lord would provide. He would never be so unkind as to leave us without grounds for a fight."

The Non-Conformists of England and especially the Baptists of the British Isles, still chuckle over an incident which occurred at the palace of the Bishop of Cork. The distinguished Church of England Bishop entertained with an elaborate dinner for the notable visitors from America. He had not been informed as to their religious affiliations, but somehow assumed that they must be Episcopalians and Bishops, since they were charged with such grave responsibilities. Being in uniform, there was nothing about their garb to disclose their ecclesiastical rank. It turned out that all the other guests were "Churchmen" of the Anglican persuasion. Dr. Truett was seated at the Bishop's right. As soon as "grace" had been said, the Bishop began to ply Dr. Truett with questions about Episcopal men and affairs in the States, concerning which Dr. Truett quickly exhausted his limited information and plainly showed his embarrassment. All the while Dr. Francis

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was much amused as he overheard Dr. Truett's non-committal replies.

Finally, Dr. Truett said, "Bishop, evidently you are laboring under a misapprehension. I am not an Episcopalian and therefore I do not know as much about your people in my country as I wish I did."

"Ah, indeed, I was mistaken. Pray, what are you religiously, if not a Churchman?"

Dr. Truett replied, "I am a Baptist."

"But you are a bishop, are you not?"

"Well, yes. I am the bishop of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas."

"Oh," said the Bishop, "then you must tell me something about your people. I do not know very much of them. You say you are the Bishop of Dallas?"

"No. I said I was the bishop of the First Baptist Church of Dallas," explained Dr. Truett.

"I do not understand," replied the Bishop. "I did not know that you Baptists had bishops among you. I knew that the Methodists and some others have bishops among them. And you say you are a bishop?"

"Yes, I am a bishop, and have been for twenty-five years." Dr. Francis, across the table was about to explode with laughter. Dr. Truett dared not look at him.

After a pause the Bishop put another question. He said, "Do you have many bishops in your Baptist communion?"

"Yes," replied Dr. Truett. "We have thousands of them, at least ten thousand of them in the United States."

"Upon my word! You amaze me. This is most

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extraordinary!" exclaimed the Bishop. Then he changed the subject and, if still living, is no doubt wondering about those multitudinous American Baptist bishops.

Upon their return to London, Dr. Francis, in great glee, related this incident to some of the English Baptist "bishops," who still regard it as "a capital story."

On October 3, 1918, George Truett wrote his aged father at Whitewright, Texas, as follows:

I am in Ireland this week, and every waking hour is crowded with interest and work. Indeed, I am busy, intensely busy, seeing and helping the men. You will understand that the men to be helped are on all sides—in training camps, rest camps, hospitals, etc. Have had some wonderful days with the men. One day I preached to some 15,000, and hundreds that day gave their decision for the upward way. . . .

Everywhere the most cordial welcome has been accorded me, both by soldiers and civilians. . . .

There could not be a dull moment in such situations as I am daily meeting. Every moment is blazing with interest.

In a few days I must cross the Channel to France. Before this reaches you I shall probably be in France.

GEORGE

That a kindly Providence has ever watched over and shielded George Truett, was again made clear as he returned to England from Ireland. He had reserved passage on a certain steamer, but being detained too long by an engagement and having missed that sailing, he took the next ship, though all of his luggage had gone on the first one. That first steamer on which he

had reserved passage was sunk by a German submarine. Nearly all on board were lost and George Truett's luggage still rests on the bottom of St. George's Channel.

Early in October he and Dr. Francis went to France. Quickly they were passed up to those sectors where the American troops were most active and all along those fronts they engaged in service among the men before they went into action, and among the wounded and dying. Often many days would go by before they had a chance to remove their uniforms or sleep in a bed. They would wrap themselves up in their blankets and sleep on the ground, or in an old barn or in some abandoned trench. They advanced just as near to the front-line trenches as they were allowed to go. They spoke to the soldiers in the cantonments, the hospitals, the rest camps, the cathedrals, anywhere and everywhere. Dr. Truett delivered as many as six sermons a day. His endurance was phenomenal. Dr. John R. Mott quoted Dr. Truett in a Y. M. C. A. bulletin as follows:

The past six months have been the busiest and most strenuous of all my life. During these months I have again and again been colder and hungrier and sadder and happier than ever before. I have spoken daily, and generally two, three and four times a day to our valiant men of the American Army and Navy. Very rapidly have I gone to the camps throughout the British Isles, and in France, and in to our Army of Occupation in Germany. During the past few months I have spoken to several hundred thousand of our soldiers and sailors, including thousands of

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officers. I have spoken in the fields, and woods, and streets; in huts, tents, barns, halls, great cathedrals, market places. It has been the most challenging and romantic of all the speaking experiences of my life. My regret is more poignant than I can say that my obligations are such that I cannot continue with our men in Europe, offering them my best cheer and services, even until their return to the great welcome awaiting them in the homeland.

After speaking he was always sought out for interviews by the soldiers. Frequently he had an eighteen-hour working day. And it was work of the most exhausting kind. After preaching five or six times during the day and talking privately with scores and scores of the men, he wrote letters far into the night by a flickering light. He wrote to some loved one of every soldier boy he met from Texas—mother, father, wife, sister, sweetheart, anyone the boy named—and he met them by the hundreds. Likewise, he wrote to the loved ones in other states of those numerous boys he was with when they died, in the hospitals and dressing stations. More than one expired in his arms. Those letters are treasured as precious possessions in hundreds of American homes to this day.

In fact, his correspondence from the front in France was one of the most astounding things connected with his service over-seas. All who were associated with him in those strenuous months were amazed at his endurance, his cheerfulness, his patience and his ability to call forth almost instantly the respect, the confidence and the heart response of those thousands of men in uniform.

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About this time, Mrs. Truett received the following letter from Dr. Truett:

Am in a great camp, and have today spoken six times to the men—the officers tell me that I have easily spoken today to 15,000 men. I would have gladly crossed the ocean and braved all the perils and hardships for what I have seen and felt today. Multitudes—vast multitudes came to the side of our great Saviour and King. Impossible to tell you how great it was. Never, never, can I get away from the greatness and blessedness of this day. To God be all the praise, forever! Must wait to tell you about it, because it will take a long time to tell about it today. It will ever be remembered by me as one of life's highest days.

Met a number of Dallas boys, to whose mothers I shall write a line (not of our church) and met hosts of Texas and Southern boys I knew. We were all so glad together. They followed me everywhere and vast numbers of them took their stand for the great Saviour.

I am so tired, but so happy that I wonder if I can get to sleep tonight at all. Am with the boys in camp, and am in perfect health. How good is our Saviour and King. Pass on my best to everybody.

GEORGE

Some three hundred young men and women from his church took part in the World War as soldiers, sailors, and special welfare workers.

He never indulged in flag-waving oratory. The men were fed up on that kind of thing anyhow. And, besides, he had never indulged in it elsewhere and of course he knew better than to hand out chaff to men who were face to face with the vital issues of life and

death. Instead, he did just what he had always done. He preached the same gospel to the soldiers that he had preached for twenty-five years. And they listened to it, and thousands of them believed it and heeded it just as the people back home had done. The great central truths of religion, expressed in simple language, vitally related to life, illumined by forceful and homely illustrations, and all coming warm from a sincere heart, appealed to those soldiers just as it appealed to the cowboys of the West, the college students of America and the cosmopolitan dwellers in his beloved Dallas.

Near the end of 1918 Dr. Truett was quoted in one of the Y. M. C. A. bulletins as follows:

Now and then the suggestion is heard that our American soldiers and sailors have had little or no interest in the highest appeals of religion, and have protested against such appeals. The suggestion is utterly wide of the mark, and would be ludicrous if the subject talked about were not so serious. Such suggestion is sheer drivel, and is a distinct reflection upon the intelligence and motives of those who felt disposed to give utterance to such flippant and flabby nonsense. It is a distinct reflection, also, upon the very pick and flower of the young Manhood of America, and upon their homes and training. Vast numbers of our young soldiers and sailors are men from the colleges and universities. When we had one million two hundred and fifty thousand men with our Army and Navy overseas, one-fifth of such number were from the colleges. I happen to know that many of these fine young men from our schools, and their equally worthy comrades from the farm

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and factory, and every other legitimate field of endeavor, protest against the cheap, silly, and sometimes cocksure suggestion that the appeal of religion, involving the highest and deepest realities of life and conduct and destiny, should be anything other than the most challenging and welcome appeal that could be brought to them. Time and again I have seen these young men standing in the rain, unable to get inside the overcrowded hut or tent, giving the most rapt attention to the most serious religious message. They understand that true religion is the bedrock of civilization, and that in religion are to be found the ideals and energies which are now and ever will be the one sufficient help and hope for humanity.

Many, besides Dr. John R. Mott, head of the Y. M. C. A., said that the ministry of George Truett to the soldiers abroad was perhaps the most effective of any preacher who went out from America.

On Thanksgiving Day he wrote to Mrs. Truett about General Pershing, as follows:

This has been an indescribably glorious Thanksgiving Day. I have spent it at a great military center, where I have seen the military forces on dress parade and in every way at their best. This morning I attended an unusually impressive Thanksgiving service, the address being made by General Pershing. It was a noble address in every respect. I trust you will see it in full tomorrow in the daily papers and that it may be read around the world. It was glorious to see and hear this noble military leader as he spoke this morning. The occasion was strikingly unique. Thousands of American soldiers, thousands of miles from home, perhaps 2,000 or 3,000 of them officers, stood around the

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General while he spoke. He looked and spoke as a great soldier at his best. Young men cannot fail to be impressed tremendously by such a leader. He has a voice of fine carrying power and his every sentence was perfect.

Before and after his address bands played in such a way as to thrill our hearts. Prayer was offered before the address, and while it was being offered the hush of midnight was over the vast throng. Gratitude untellable was written on every face and joy too deep for words flashed from every eye. Never in all the history of civilization did Thanksgiving seem to mean as much as it means today. God reigns and his throne is established in righteousness. Therefore, let all the earth this day rejoice and give him devoutest thanks. Emotions too deep for human language filled our hearts today as we sang "America" and then sang the "Marseillaise" and then "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Quite a number of French and British officers were present and their hearts were one with the Americans in the never-to-be-forgotten Thanksgiving service.

General Pershing is altogether a capable and worthy leader of the American Army. His men both respect and love him. It is not at all surprising, when one comes into close contact with him. He is a very genuine man and, like every true gentleman, he is nobly considerate of all those who are about him. He is a delightful conversationalist. When our country first got into the great conflict, this was the way he talked to the men: "Hardship will be your lot, but trust in God will be your comfort. Temptation will befall you, but the teachings of our Saviour will give you strength. Let your valor as a soldier and your conduct as a man be an inspiration to your comrades and an honor to your country." On the high plane voiced in these lofty words, General Pershing has given direction to our American Army. I thank God for him. Our country

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will ever delight to hold him in most grateful remembrance.

After the service this morning I had Thanksgiving dinner with a great group of officers. It was a great dinner—indeed, the best I have had since I left America. I am inclosing you menu card. You will see that we were not allowed to go hungry. Well, we all did the subject full justice, officers and all the men in the ranks alike. And we sang at the tables just like schoolboys, sang till the very hills almost shook.

Next to being back in dear Dallas—the dearest spot on earth to me—I would rather have been here yesterday than anywhere else in the world. The great occasion will gratefully live in my memory forever. My grateful pride in America and in the American Army and Navy was never before so high as it is today. And it warms my heart to the depths to find out daily and hourly that our noble Texas men have measured up to the very highest standards in this destiny-determining struggle. I hear their praises night and day, wherever I go, and they know without my saying so, how inexpressibly happy it makes me.

After the Armistice was signed, Dr. Truett went into Germany with the Army of Occupation for two or three months and there continued his ministry among the men under infinitely more pleasant surroundings. He was billeted for a while in a modest German home, presided over by a devout and motherly housewife who constantly kept fresh flowers in his room and somehow managed always to have some fruit, or little cakes, or some other food on the small table beside his bed when he came in at night from

his day's service with the soldiers. After all the turmoil and blood and death on the Western Front, the peace of the pious homes, the softness and cleanness of the beds, and the excessive cordiality of the German people generally, seemed quite heavenly. It appeared that Germans were doing everything in their power to make a good impression on the Army of Occupation and thereby counteract some of the propaganda of war days which had portrayed them as a very heartless people. That their efforts were, in large measure, successful with the rank and file of the American men was evidenced by the remark often heard among them as they said, "Boys, as sure as you live, we've been fighting the wrong crowd. We like these Germans more than any other people we've met on this side of the big pond."

As Christmas time drew near Dr. Truett got more and more homesick. It was to be his first Christmas away from home—a home which always made much of the happy season. He managed to fight off his loneliness by increased ministries among the men of the Army. But when, on Christmas Eve, he came into his room and found a small, tinselled Christmas tree on the table beside his bed, and in a few minutes heard carol singers (American Red Cross nurses) in the street below his window singing "Silent Night, Holy Night," he could stand it no longer. He fell on his knees beside his bed while his great frame shook with uncontrollable sobs. Tears that had been pent up for many months, lest soldiers see them and misunderstand, coursed down

his rugged face. After this season of unutterable loneliness, he began to pray for his loved ones back home, naming their names before the throne of grace.

His homesickness was driven away by his prayers for others. Short, restful sleep came before the dawn, and Christmas Day in Germany was for him much better than he had thought it could possibly be. And the soldiers who heard his Christmas messages that day would have found it hard to believe that this man had cried the night before, unless perchance, they, too, had been lonely.

After six months, the agreed period of service overseas, Dr. Truett headed for home through France. While there, he was invited to dine with and to address a group of some three hundred French civil and military leaders at a quiet retreat some distance from Paris. None of them were Baptists. Their amazement was unbounded as he unfolded to them some of his most cherished Baptist principles—especially the doctrine of religious liberty. He spoke thus to them:

Gentlemen, we Baptists believe in the competency of the individual in all matters pertaining to the soul. We hold that neither priest nor ecclesiastical hierarchy, nor state, nor magistrate, nor any other human agency has the right to dictate to the individual soul in matters spiritual. We conceive of religion as being a personal, individual, voluntary and spiritual relationship between a man and his Creator and Saviour. In our scheme of things there is no room whatsoever for coercion, or the use of physical force, in the realm of religion. For example, Gentlemen, I am a Baptist and would rejoice to see men everywhere

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voluntarily accept the tenets of my faith, because I sincerely believe those tenets to be in harmony with the revealed truths of God; but if by the pressure of the weight of my little finger I could physically coerce every person in the world to become a Baptist, I tell you frankly and truthfully, I would withhold that pressure, even of the weight of my little finger. Religion must be free. The soul must have absolute liberty to believe or not to believe, to worship or not to worship, to say "Yes" or "No" to God, even as that soul, and that soul alone, shall dictate. Every true Baptist in the world—and there are millions of them—would take the same stand that I take on this matter, because they believe, and I believe, this to be the clear teaching of the New Testament as to religious freedom.

These statements from their guest speaker were loudly applauded by these Frenchmen who had never heard such sentiments expressed in exactly this fashion. They were amazed and impressed to learn that there are millions of people in the world who believed and taught such manifest truths as these.

Then he sped away to his homeland, across the Atlantic to New York, and on to his dear Dallas. Shortly before his arrival home, the following letter from Dr. Francis was received by the First Baptist Church of Dallas:

New York City,
January 28, 1919.

To the Members of the First Baptist Church,
Dallas, Texas.

DEAR FRIENDS:

It has been my happy lot to be associated for the last five months with your honored Pastor, sharing the same

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room, making the same journeys and often occupying the same platform.

I wish to do myself the pleasure of saying to you all that this fellowship is one of the red-letter privileges of my life. It is my deliberate judgment that no speaker has come from America during the war whose addresses have gripped all kinds of men in our Expeditionary Force so powerfully, or whose influence has reached so far. The challenge of the mighty day and opportunity seemed to put him at his best, and whether speaking in some French barnyard, in the rain or in some fine Cathedral, he rose to the level of the great events that were transpiring and lifted the men with him. I have seen our doughboys stand outside a hut in the rain when there was no room inside, to hear him speak of life's deepest meanings manward and Godward. There will not be a State in our great Union where his words will not be remembered and repeated. Men who held that you could not get across a serious message in the army or navy abandoned that view when they had heard him but once.

His power over audiences was only equalled by his shepherd care of the individual man. Many a boy after a brief talk felt as if Dr. Truett had crossed the ocean to see him. God only knows how many hundreds of homes where they had never seen his face were gladdened by a brief note saying that he had seen their boy and that he was well and doing his duty like a man.

A job is as big as a man makes it; and Dr. Truett fulfilled this great mission as a friend of man and as a servant of the Son of God.

No welcome you can give him can be too warm and no honor too great. I congratulate the First Church of Dallas that it has, through its Pastor, rendered a service that will not die with the war, but will go on

SERVICE OVER-SEAS

*"Till blending with the broad, bright stream of
sanctified endeavor*

God's glory be its ocean home the end it seeketh ever."

I have the honor to be his friend and your fellow-worker.

JAMES A. FRANCIS,
First Baptist Church,
Los Angeles, California

The day before his arrival, the following appeared in a Dallas newspaper: ³

PUBLIC TO WELCOME DR. TRUETT HOME

Large Crowd Expected to Meet Train
Tomorrow Afternoon

Plans for the reception of Dr. George W. Truett, who has been in France for some time and has now returned to this country, have been made by members of the First Baptist Church and other Baptist churches and by citizens of Dallas. Dr. Truett will arrive in Dallas tomorrow afternoon between 2 and 2:30 o'clock and will be met at the station by a committee of citizens. Members of the First Baptist Church will hold an informal reception for him tomorrow night at the church and Thursday evening the formal banquet will be given at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

A committee composed of 200 prominent citizens of Dallas is making preparations for the reception at the station.

The reception to be held at the church tomorrow night will be quite informal and will be given by members of the church of which Dr. Truett is pastor. Words of welcome will be delivered by Dr. J. B. Gambrell, representing the Baptists of the South. Other speakers rep-

³ Reprinted by permission of the *Dallas News*.

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resenting Texas Baptists, Dallas Baptists, and the citizens of Dallas, will speak. Robert H. Coleman, pastor's assistant, will preside.

The ushers will be young men of the church who have also seen service for the Government of the United States and have returned to Dallas. Special music of patriotic songs has been arranged and Henri LaBonte will sing "The Marseillaise." Joseph B. Rucker will sing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The receiving line will be composed of Dr. and Mrs. George W. Truett and Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Coleman. The address of the evening will be made by Dr. Truett himself.

The formal banquet on Thursday evening will be open to the public, although it is under the auspices of the Baptist Women's City Union and Baptist Pastor's Association.

His family met his train at Greenville, forty miles north of Dallas, for a little visit with him before he should be surrounded at the station at Dallas.

It was a heart-warming home-coming. One thousand people attended the banquet at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

A citizen of Dallas, not a member of Dr. Truett's church, said some years later:

The most inspiring vision I have of him belongs to the day on which he came home from the World War. He had gone to France at the request of President Woodrow Wilson to speak to our men as only he can speak, and when he came back, all Dallas gave their first citizen such an ovation as we never gave any one. His spirit, his response that day showed the great man that he is.

SERVICE OVER-SEAS

Those months of service overseas added a certain martial strain to his preaching which has often lifted his audiences to unrestrained expressions of patriotic and moral fervor. Wherever he has gone in America, ex-service men have heard him gladly and understandingly through the subsequent years, because he has spoken their language whenever he has drawn upon war days for incidents or principles illustrating the eternal issues of life and of death. For them and hosts of other disillusioned people he has been able to recapture some of the dignity, heroism, altruism and idealism which, for a time, surged through most American hearts, an enthusiasm which was later forced into almost total eclipse by the sordid hypocrisy and selfishness of war and its aftermath.

A Builder of Churches

DR. JEFF D. RAY of the Southwestern Theological Seminary published in *The Star-Telegram* of Fort Worth on April 11, 1937 a brief historical sketch of the First Baptist Church in Dallas.¹

The First Baptist Church in Dallas was constituted July 30, 1868, with 11 members: Col. W. L. Williams, Mrs. W. L. Williams, E. C. Mays, John Hanna, Mrs. W. L. Bowen, Mrs. C. F. Mays, Mrs. N. E. Collins, Mrs. Martha Seegar, Mrs. C. S. Akard and Mrs. M. E. Kerfoot. This action grew out of a two-week revival held by Rev. W. W. Harris in which there was one conversion.

For about five years the struggling little church worshipped in the lower half of a small wooden building owned by the Masonic lodge—the upper floor being used for lodge meetings, the lower floor by Masonic courtesy being used for school, and church purposes.

In 1872 the church called Rev. Abram Weaver to act as both pastor and financial agent to solicit funds for a building. With what he raised on the outside and what the members, mainly the women, could raise in the village they built a modest meeting house in 1873 and were overjoyed that after much tribulation and untold difficulties they could at last worship God “under their own vine and fig tree.”

¹ Reprinted by permission of the writer.

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In 1890 the church bought the present building site on North Ervay and erected a brick auditorium. In 1908 the building was remodeled and enlarged. By 1924 the congregation had so grown that the auditorium was again remodeled and enlarged to its present seating capacity of 4,000. By 1924 the Sunday school had grown to such proportions—an average attendance of 2,700—that the church built a seven-story educational building with a capacity of 7,000. In the building is a prayer meeting auditorium seating 800 and a number of large classrooms which will accommodate from 100 to 400 each. Here also is a well equipped kitchen and dining room capable of handling 500 people at a meal. It is a far cry from the little one-room frame building of 1873 to these buildings covering a whole block, containing 282 rooms and costing \$1,250,000.

For the past 12 years the Sunday school has had an average attendance of 2,713. Mr. R. H. Coleman has been its superintendent for 28 years.

During its history the church has had as pastors W. W. Harris, 1868; C. A. Stanton, 1871; Abram Weaver, 1872; G. W. Rogers, 1876; J. H. Curry, 1878; R. T. Hanks, 1883; A. M. Simms, 1890; C. L. Seasholes, 1892; George W. Truett, 1897 to date.

During Rev. Mr. Truett's ministry of forty years the membership of the church has grown from 715 to more than 7,000. During these forty years he has received into the church 15,789, of whom 4,324 came on profession of faith for baptism. The financial record for the entire forty years is not complete but for the last 20 years the total gifts of the church have been \$3,637,328.87, of which \$1,668,817.79 was for outside causes—missions, benevolences, Christian education, etc. This means that for 20 years the church has spent annually on its local

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work, including its buildings, an average of more than \$180,000 and has given to missions and other outside causes an average of more than \$80,000. For 1936 the contributions of the church were for local work, \$123,310, and for outside causes, \$287,653.

The pastor has eight assistants. It is a striking fact that with one exception the period of their employment ranges from 10 to 33 years.

About the time the church entered its first humble house of worship two railroads, the H. & T. C. and the T. & P., reached the pioneer village and it at once and perhaps for the first time began to feel that it was destined to become a real city, and the little church began to establish mission stations from time to time in various parts of the now fast growing town. Out of these missions begun in the humblest way—meeting in vacant stores, in private residences and even in the open, under liveoak trees—have come some of the strongest churches in Texas—among them Gaston Avenue, Ervay Street, McKinney Avenue, Ross Avenue, Cliff Temple, etc.

Peter Clark MacFarlane, correspondent of *Collier's Weekly*, attended services at the First Baptist Church in Dallas during the summer of 1912. His featured article, entitled "The Apostle to the Texans," appeared in *Collier's*, January 4, 1913. In the course of his intensely interesting "write-up" of Dr. Truett he briefly described the church which had been remodeled in 1908:

The auditorium of this church is a fine piece of Gothic improvisation—the improvisation being due to the necessity of doubling its capacity to meet the necessities of

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the Truett congregations. But the Gothic effect has been preserved, and the auditorium lifts itself in noble vistas three directions from the pulpit. Space, airiness, grace, and almost the effect of an outdoor temple are the achievements of the architects in this built-over structure.²

Continuing, MacFarlane described the preacher and his sermon:

Dr. Truett entered his pulpit unobtrusively, almost stealthily. He wore a short black coat of some light fabric—it might have been alpaca—I am no wizard of warps and woofs. When he stood up to speak there was little to remind one of the arts of the practiced orator. There was no “taking of the stage,” no impressive silences that gathered the audience up and up and up into the arms of his personality. His voice was not rich, though they told me he had worn it out by preaching thrice daily to the cowboys and talking with them interminably between services, for he had just come from his annual week with them. Anyway, I found it heady, and in vehemence throaty.

Neither his utterances nor his manner seemed at first magnetic. He appeared to depend upon a kind of dominance of will to compel the attention of his auditors. And he got it. From the beginning there was absolute attention from these two or three thousand people who had been hearing him for fifteen years. Yet one felt as one listened that these were only the preliminary and labored minutes of a discourse that presently would soar.

With short smashing sentences the man was beating back the barriers on all sides and opening a way for every

² Used by permission of *Collier's*.

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mind to his line of thought. At the same time there was a growing intentness of manner. Physically he hardly moved. His face was tense. He has very white and very perfect teeth, and these teeth gleamed continually as he bit out his words.

At times his thought was slow and his words were slow in consequence, but he seemed always about to say something so important that no syllable of it must be missed.

"Creeds!" he suddenly shouted—"Creeds are in order to *be*. Creeds must *get* somewhere. A creed that doesn't *arrive* is a vain thing. A great *believer* is a great *doer*!"

His voice rang louder; his teeth gleamed whiter; the beams of his eyes shot farther. Something new had come into his voice, not the familiar Southern oratorical cadence, but a kind of minor, rhythmic beat that now and then swelled out into major with a great burst of suppressed passion.

Abruptly he began to pile up historical allusions—short, moving incidents that were fresh and vital—that had no stale smell of homiletic scrapbooks, but sharp at the corners, as though just quarried from the rich layers of history by the man's own hands. He told with marvelous dramatic power the story of the heroic defenders of the Dutch City of Leyden. With eyes flashing and form quivering, he declared for a strong-armed Christianity: "There is no glory," he shouted, "in being an invalid—no virtue in being stupid."

"All power," he said a few moments later, "all intellectual power, personal power, financial power—all power is under *obligation to humanity*! It must serve, serve, serve! as David, by the will of God, served his generation."

And that is the last note I have. The preacher had launched himself. He was soaring now. There was a sheen upon his face. His eyes no longer flashed—they streamed,

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beaconing forth the message of the man's blazing soul. There was no more effort, no more compelling of attention by the sheer force of will.

All the force had gone out of the man. Power had come in its place. Sometimes his voice was tremulous with a low note of pathos. Sometimes it roared like a storm in the mountains. Sometimes, again, it was like the hoarse murmur of many waters, and rose like a wave of the sea higher and higher, to curl and break in a spray of white-hot whispers that searched the corners of the auditorium like hissing jets of steam.

There were no arguments. Illustrations became fewer. Unsupported assertions were made and accepted on the authority of a soul on fire. There were apostrophes; there were pleas; there were denunciations; there were touches of emotion that brought tears; there were flashes of subtle humor that brought smiles; and there was a continual unbaring, a continual quarrying down into the hearts of his hearers. A Texanic directness is a characteristic of the man's preaching. Like the fox in the Spartan's breast, he tears directly into the vitals of a man till his heart is laid bare to himself. Now I understood why some of the men at the dinner said they could not hear him often. They could not hear him and resist him. They would have had to "come under to the Mayster." He would have overwhelmed them.

Once the man's oratorical passions are aroused he attacks like a whirlwind. He comes on like a cavalry charge. You hear the beat of drums, the clatter of sabers, the huzzas of advancing hosts. The ground rocks and reels with the thunder and thud of ten thousand hoofs, and suddenly there in the midst of you is that figure with the burning cheek, the gleaming teeth, and the blazing eye, swinging high the sword of his flashing spirit and

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hacking his way to your heart. Pulpit and choir, transept and arch, audience and organ, the very body of the man in his black alpaca coat, fade away. Only the glowing aura of a soul remains; yes, and the cheek still burning, and the teeth still gleaming, and the eye of the man still blazing. For a few moments longer this phenomenon continues. It is the flame of a soul on fire, the passion of an apostle, the transfiguration of a preacher by the heat of his own convictions.

Back the mind runs for a moment to the mountain boy who at nineteen can make a high school out of a tobacco barn in Georgia; who at twenty-three can lift the debt on a college; who, while pastor of a great church and giving himself to its demands as a few constitutions could, can yet be the bishop of the souls of a thousand cowboys in a crack of the mountains seven hundred miles away; who in the by-whiles of his season's work can build a sanatorium at a cost of half a million dollars; who can read as he flies all the latest books; who can cause people to stand for hours in the aisles to hear his convention sermons; and who, while doing all this, can live a life so pure and strong and true and gentle that all his townsmen love him and will take their oath no preacher of modern times more nearly lives his message. . . . Well, to call such a man Texanic is to make the word bigger than it could ever become through all the labored phrasings and connotations of lexicographers.

Yes, George W. Truett is Texanic! Undoubtedly, Texanic!

In 1924 the church auditorium was again remodeled and enlarged, with two galleries, and a choir space which seats about seventy-five singers back of the pulpit. The seating capacity of the whole auditorium

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is 4,000. It is nothing unusual on Sunday mornings for every seat to be taken, for several hundred chairs to be placed in the aisles, and, even then, for hundreds of people to be turned away for lack of room. The acoustics of this vast auditorium are surprisingly good. Visiting preachers nearly always comment on it favorably. One can speak in his natural voice and be heard anywhere in the vast room, especially so if it be anywhere near filled with people.

People are greatly impressed by the magnitude of the physical equipment of Dr. Truett's church, but the spiritual house is vastly more so to those who have eyes to see and recognize spiritual values. Casual observers note the large membership, the great Sunday school enrollment and attendance, the five or six hundred young people in the Baptist Training Union, the thousand or so members of the Woman's Auxiliary, the hundreds of thousands of dollars contributed each year for current support of the local church and for missions and benevolences, and the vast social service program which reaches out so helpfully to the multitudes of Dallas. But back of all this, and explaining it all, is the spiritual dynamic of a great group of regenerated people who have caught the vision of the Christ and are dominated by the Master's spirit. Their pastor has taught them and trained them and inspired them by precept and example.

Measured by spiritual standards, the First Baptist Church of Dallas is truly a splendid organization. It is evangelistic, missionary, cooperative, friendly, loyal and generous. It carries on the Lord's work whether

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the pastor is there or not. Cheerfully and ever generously his congregation has shared him with others. The members love their church and her services. Thousands of them attend no matter who may be supplying the pulpit; and visiting preachers nearly always remark on the spiritual responsiveness of the church. They have a way of putting a visiting minister at ease and calling out his best. Many speakers have had a feeling of embarrassment as they entered that pulpit for the first time. But the excellent congregational singing, the eager expectancy of the audience, the simple, yet reverent informality of it all, Bob Coleman's fervent "Amens" from one of the pulpit chairs, the uplifting anthems by the great, white-robed choir under the organ guidance of Mrs. Cassidy—these things quickly drive away any embarrassment at the thought of standing in George Truett's pulpit. It is an audience and a setting which call out whatever preaching ability there may be in one. Scores of preachers could testify as to the truth of these observations.

Let no one conclude that all of the seven thousand members of this church are spiritually minded and spiritually responsive. Many are not. But vast numbers of them are, and they are the ones who set the pace and make the atmosphere so congenial.

Forty-one years of George Truett's deeply spiritual ministry have gone into the upbuilding of this spiritual temple, this house of God not made with hands. The First Baptist Church of Dallas abides as his most enduring monument.

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Constantly their pastor is challenging them with appeals like the following:

O my fellow Christians of this church, a church dearer to me than my heart's blood. . . . I summon you anew today to give your best to Christ; to be done with all playing at your religion; to be done with all lukewarmness. I summon you to come with the red, rich blood of human sympathy for all mankind, for good and bad, for high and low, for rich and poor, and give your best to win this city and state and world to Jesus, so that you hear that plaudit which it were worth worlds at last to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."³

One unusual feature of this church's organization is the large Finance Committee composed of all deacons and approximately one hundred and fifty other men. Meetings are held at stated times and "upon call" whenever special need arises. This committee makes special effort during the fall months in connection with the Every Member Canvass. The work and influence of this group explains, at least in part, many of the notable financial records of this church.

In 1927 Mr. H. H. Baish, member of the United Brethren Church, of Harrisburg, Pa., was present at the First Baptist Church of Dallas on a Sunday morning when the Every Member Canvass was being launched. The reader, no doubt, will be interested in extracts from Mr. Baish's article entitled "A Day with

³ *We Would See Jesus*—page 75.

Doctor Truett," which appeared in the *Religious Telescope*.⁴

We had read that Doctor Truett has led the laymen of his congregation not only to win men to Christ, but has created in them a passion to use their income for the cause of God.

I had read how Doctor Truett said: "We emphasize stewardship, not for the purpose of getting the money, but for the purpose of developing the giver in the Christian life. To give is to live; to withhold is to die."

Having, therefore, heard so much about Doctor Truett and his congregation, we were expecting to hear a great sermon and see a great church. It rained steadily all Sunday morning and we were satisfied, on our way to church, that we would have no difficulty in securing a good seat, as we expected that the rain would interfere with the attendance.

Having misjudged the distance to the church, we were later than we intended. We arrived just as the service was about to begin. In spite of the rain, we found the large auditorium filled. An usher had difficulty in finding seats for us in a pew in the rear of the church.

Doctor Truett preached a fine spiritual sermon which met our highest expectations in every way. At the close of the preaching service Doctor Truett made an announcement which interested us very much, when he said that the every-member canvass for their benevolent budget would be made that Sunday afternoon, starting at two o'clock.

He urged every member of the church to be at home, if possible, during the entire afternoon, and to be prepared to fill out the pledge card for the benevolent

⁴ Reprinted by permission of the *Religious Telescope*.

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budget promptly, that the canvassers might not be delayed.

He then took about five minutes to explain the purpose of the benevolences. We might have heard the same story in a United Brethren Church, as he described the needs of their home and foreign missions, their colleges and theological seminary, their ministerial pension plan, and other denominational activities.

Doctor Truett then stated that some of the members might not find it possible to be at home during the afternoon when the canvassers would call, and he would therefore give such persons an opportunity to make their subscriptions at once.

... A plentiful supply of pledge cards were in the racks in the backs of the pews. Forty canvassers, who were well distributed on the main floor of the church and on the gallery, were asked to rise and be prepared to receive the pledges. Promptly two pledges for \$5,000 each were recorded. Then several pledges for \$2,500 each, and more for \$2,000 each, and a number of \$1,000 and for \$500 were given.

A lady just a few seats in front of us arose and said that she wanted to be one of one hundred women to give \$100 each. We counted twenty-one women in our section of the church who rose and accepted the challenge.

No pledges of less than \$100 were reported. Within fifteen minutes \$40,000 was subscribed. . . .

The congregation was dismissed at fifteen minutes past twelve o'clock. We saw no one leave the church before the service was ended. What impressed us greatly was the spirit of worship that prevailed up to the close of the service. Every one seemed to be wonderfully interested, and the entire congregation was in a thoughtful, reverent

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attitude while the subscriptions were being received. We did not learn what the benevolent quota of the church was, but we would not be surprised if they raised as much as the largest conference apportionment in our denomination.

The largest single collection ever taken in the First Baptist Church of Dallas was for \$507,850.00, at the launching of the Seventy-five Million Campaign of Southern Baptists during 1919. Dr. Truett has never had many very rich men in his membership. Col. C. C. Slaughter was perhaps the wealthiest member the church ever had. The excellent financial records made by this church are the result not of huge gifts from the few, but of thousands of liberal gifts from the many.

Through all the forty-one years of his Dallas pastorate, Dr. Truett has gone to the aid of other pastors and churches for revival meetings and dedication services where efforts were made to pay off the debts on the buildings being dedicated. Thus he has helped to build churches, both physical and spiritual—many hundreds of them. No records have been kept of all these revival meetings and these dedicatory services and their results. There were hundreds of such revival meetings, most of them lasting about ten days. Only heavenly records can reveal the full spiritual results of his ministries to churches other than his own. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Canada to Argentina and around the world, he has held special evangelistic services, in churches big and small, in schools of many kinds, in tents and tabernacles, in brush arbors and municipal auditoriums, in stately cathedrals and open-

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air spaces. He has gone, preaching the gospel of the Son of God, winning the lost, strengthening the weak and tempted, fortifying the churches and building them up.

One very helpful form of his services to Southern Baptist Churches through the years—not often mentioned—has been the many articles written by him and printed in the Baptist weeklies of the South, appealing to the churches to support worthily great and challenging denominational causes. As a rule, they are brief articles, which, frequently, are featured on the front pages of the denominational press. They are never controversial, but always are based on scripture and are essentially spiritual in their emphasis. Many pastors and churches have found genuine tonic in these articles from Dr. Truett's pen.

A Citizen of No Mean City

PAUL was proud to assert that he was "a citizen of no mean city," Tarsus in Cilicia.¹ Likewise George Truett, for over forty years, has rejoiced to be a citizen of Dallas, Texas, one of the great cities of America. He has seen it grow from a town of a few thousands into a magnificent city of nearly four hundred thousand people which is frequently referred to as "the New York of the Southwest." It is the center of one of the richest agricultural sections of the nation, the southwestern headquarters of nearly all the great industrial concerns which operate on a national scale, a center of much of the activity of the greatest oil fields in the world, the home of great educational, eleemosynary, medical, fraternal, and religious institutions.

Dallas is the great Baptist center of the Southwest. There are more than seventy-five Baptist churches, white and colored, at least a half dozen of them having memberships ranging from two to seven thousand. Here are located:

The Baptist Standard (weekly circulation of over 40,000).

Baptist State Headquarters: All offices for the agencies of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, in-

¹ Acts 21:39.

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cluding those for State Mission Secretary, State Board Treasurer, W. M. U. department, Sunday School department, B. T. U. department, and Baptist Foundation.

Baylor Medical Center: Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing (over 600 students). Baylor Hospital (patronage of 30,000 patients in 1936).

The Relief and Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Buckner Orphans' Home (over 700—staff, teachers, employees, and children).

George Truett has been a vital factor in the development of all these Baptist institutions at Dallas. He has served on the boards of nearly all of them and has personally raised vast sums of money for them.

All who know the city are impressed with her spirit—ambitious, progressive, modern. And Dallas loves preachers—especially her own George Truett who has been so closely identified with every phase of her development. Her civic leaders say that Pastor Truett has done more than any other man to mold their city along lines of lasting worth and civic virtue. To an astonishing degree, his ideals serve as a guide to conscience for vast numbers in the great city, thousands of whom are not of his church, and many not of any church. And this is likewise true with many thousands throughout Texas.

Some years ago there was a bill before the State Legislature to legalize horse-racing and betting at the State Fair in Dallas. The main purpose of the fair has been to promote the agricultural, industrial, and educational development of Texas. Some years the attend-

ance has exceeded a million people during the ten days or two weeks of the fair. This seemed a golden opportunity to the horse-racing proponents who maintained a powerful lobby in the Legislature in Austin and made the specious and ancient plea that horse-racing would promote the livestock interests of the state. Such pressure was brought to bear upon the legislators that the bill appeared almost certain of passage. As the fair was on at that time, the entire legislative body recessed to spend the week-end in Dallas "at the fair." A leader among them thought it would lend dignity to the occasion if they all attended church on Sunday. Hence it was proposed and agreed that they go in a body to hear Dr. Truett on Sunday morning.

Dr. Truett was notified of their coming and prepared a sermon that never mentioned horse-racing or gambling. His sermon was based on the story of the wild man of Gadara, out of whom Jesus cast the legion of demons which entered swine and caused them to rush pell-mell into the sea and be drowned. Whereupon the owners of the swine and the other people of the region besought Jesus to leave their country, because they were a people who placed a higher value upon their hogs than upon their citizens. In that sermon, even as in the New Testament, the Gadarenes were shown to be a sorry lot of materialists who put property rights above human rights, who would rather have their hogs safe than to have their citizens freed of evil spirits. They would rather have hogs in their midst than the Son of God.

No mention was made of the State Fair, or the bill

pending before the Legislature, but every person present readily applied the ancient story to the present issue. The chief sponsor of the bill before the Legislature was overheard to say, as they left the church that day: "Whoever proposed bringing this crowd of law-makers to hear this preacher today sure played Hell. My racing bill is dead as a salt herring right now." And it was. They returned to Austin and promptly killed the bill.

Dr. Truett has always sought to do his full duty as a citizen, but has consistently refused to allow himself to be entangled in the meshes of personal or partisan politics. If, in his judgment, conditions require it, he discusses current, local, state, national or international issues in terms of the moral and spiritual principles involved, never in terms of personalities.

An incident occurred in Dallas some years after the "Hogs or Citizens" sermon which well illustrates the wisdom of his method of dealing with controversial public issues, and demonstrates his great influence in his own community. The firemen of the city had long sought better treatment from the "City Fathers," without avail. The issue finally came to a head. The firemen voted to go out on strike. This was a serious decision, since the safety of the whole city was at stake. The strike was scheduled to begin on a certain Tuesday. The Sunday preceding, all the firemen in the city, not on active duty, attended Dr. Truett's church in a body and heard him preach a sermon on the obligations of stewardship.²

² I Cor. 4:2.

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After that sermon a delegation asked for a conference with Dr. Truett. They met in his study. Faithfully he pointed out to those men their obligations as stewards of the lives and properties of all the people in Dallas. He showed how terrible it would be if a great fire got started in the city while they, its guardians, were out on strike. The conference lasted only a short while and was closed with a prayer that God would lead these men to see their duty and help them to win their rights in some other fashion. Promptly the strike was called off, and from that day to this the firemen of Dallas have been the staunch friends of the faithful pastor who helped them to realize the great principles involved. Their appreciation has been shown by the fact that, for years, nearly all the firemen of Dallas have been members of the Home Department of Dr. Truett's Sunday school. Sunday school literature is taken to them once every quarter by departmental visitors and many of these men attend services at his church when off duty.

The newspaper men of Dallas have always been responsive to Dr. Truett. This has been true of publishers, editors, cartoonists, and reporters. Innumerable editorials have been written about him by Mr. George B. Dealey of the *Dallas News* and Mr. E. J. Keist of the *Times-Herald*. And other editors of the city have been gracious and generous in their treatment of him in their editorial and news columns.

The following editorial, written by George B. Dealey, appeared in the *Dallas News* of September 12,

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1932, in connection with the thirty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Truett's pastorate:³

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS

Some years ago one of the Houston newspapers carried a paragraph to the effect that the only Dallas skyscraper that Houston really coveted was George W. Truett. Many other tributes to his standing and character throughout the State, throughout the Nation and from lands beyond the sea could be presented, and doubtless many of them will be proffered before the anniversary of his coming as pastor of the First Baptist Church here shall have come to its close.

Thirty-five years ago Dr. Truett took up the responsibilities now on his shoulders. During that time he has gone in and out among his people and before the population of Dallas. All manner of distress has known his comforting, all sorts of happiness have acknowledged his influence, all kinds of personality have found strength from his courage and sympathy. Men who are thoroughly evil in their lives respect him. Those who make no claims for themselves are ready to defend him against calumny. In his presence impiety is abashed and rebuked, though bitterness has no part in him.

Dr. Truett is called an orator, and so he is. But his is the persuasiveness that is deeper than words or the arranging of words. The torrent of a whole life-stream rushing down from high places of cleanness and of good report engulfs the hearer in a crystal flood of earnestness. His is the power of withholding nothing from the business of bettering men's souls. Today he has the affection

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of all creeds and of thousands who have no creed. Yet the humblest heart in all the throng which will greet him today or any other day is—George Truett.

In the same paper, and by the same editor, the following editorial had appeared in November, 1927:⁴

THE TEST OF MAN'S GREATNESS

It is the test of a man's greatness if he can remain humble in the presence of praise. The man in Dallas who is most widely known of all her citizens, as it happens, is also the man who has been the object of admiration and of love on the part of people of the greatest diversity of standing of life. He has had many occasions to be aware of the searching qualities of praise that will not down or be dodged. And, in spite of that circumstance, George W. Truett is as modest now as he was the day he first came to Dallas as a friend of man and servant of God.

The tribute of the Chamber of Commerce and of the citizenry of Dallas to Dr. Truett did them honor more than it did him, for this truest honor comes always from within. For a third of a century the great preacher has himself preached that doctrine. And, in fair weather, and foul, before saint and sinner, under adulation as under opposition, he has quietly lived it out.

Because George Truett has lived this life and loved his neighbor as himself, more than because of any sermon he ever delivered with his lips or any post he ever held or any writing that ever came from his pen, men have marked him for what he is and have appraised the heart of him as fine gold. Here is a man who has spoken to a

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multitude as he stood on the steps of the Capitol of a great Nation. But he is best remembered for the broken words of sympathy uttered in the anguished stillness of a brother's sorrow. Here is a man who has visited the far places of the earth, and who did not forget when he got there to do his errands of mercy on behalf of the lowly. Here is a man who might have enlisted hundreds of thousands in his personal train by sweeping the country in triumphal tours, but who preferred the labors of a pastor and neighbor and friend. Dallas isn't afraid of spoiling a man like that.

Dozens of editorials of like character are found in the files of all the Dallas dailies; as, for example, this one from the *Times-Herald* of August 11, 1934:⁵

HIGH HONOR FOR DR. TRUETT

The election of Dr. George W. Truett of Dallas to the presidency of the Baptist World Alliance, which has been in session in Berlin, is recognition of a great man and a great preacher who is esteemed by members of all denominations.

The Baptist Church is democratic in its organization. Those who rise to eminence in it do so strictly by virtue of their own merit, as recognized by the lay membership. And those who are honored as leaders are not clothed with any other than their personal influence.

The prestige that Dr. Truett holds was not acquired through any theatricalism or sensationalism on his part. His pulpit oratory has always been of the conservative type. Moreover, Dr. Truett has not engaged in contro-

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versies such as contribute to the renown of some preachers.

Dr. Truett is, in fact, the straightforward, reverent, dignified, minister of the Gospel, whose profound sincerity and devotion to God is evident not only in everything he says but in his conduct as a man. He is an exponent of Christianity whose poise is not disturbed by ephemeral issues and shifting winds of doctrine.

During his long pastorate in Dallas literally hundreds of columns in the newspapers of that city have been devoted to George Truett and his ministry; and it should be said in passing that the press of his home city and state has ever dealt with him with remarkable insight and sympathy.

In all the hundreds of thousands of words we have read about him in the secular press we have not found even one word that sought to belittle or cheapen or criticize him adversely. The comments of the newspapers of this nation on Dr. Truett are a high tribute to him. He is a living refutation of the belief entertained by some that a preacher must be sensational, spectacular, and bizarre in order to be regarded as "good copy" by the press. No prominent preacher in America has been less spectacular and sensational in speech or manner than George Truett, and yet he, perhaps, has received as much sympathetic and generous consideration from the whole newspaper fraternity as any preacher in the nation.

Frequently "cub reporters," who, for the first time, are given an assignment by the city editor "to cover Dr. Truett" in some revival or on some special occa-

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sion, are disappointed because he is not more spectacular. They wonder why the multitudes flock to hear this solemn, straightforward, plain-speaking man who stands so erect, begins so quietly, neither shouts nor rants, but delivers a message which even a child can understand. They have to hear him more than once before they can understand. And when reporters have had an interview with George Truett, they usually leave with a vivid and lasting impression.

Dallas delights to honor George Truett in many ways. Again and again huge banquets have been spread in his honor when as many as a thousand citizens from all walks of life have gathered to express their loving appreciation of him and his ministries. If all the tributes paid him on such occasions were assembled, together with the editorials and news items about these civic occasions, they would make a fair-sized volume, reflecting the love of an entire city.

People of other religious faiths in Dallas love George Truett almost as much as do the Baptists. Dr. J. B. Cranfill well illustrated this point in a feature article on Dr. Truett which appeared in *The Dallas Morning News* of Sunday, May 24, 1925.⁶ Wrote Dr. Cranfill:

I have never known any minister whose work took hold upon a wider clientele than the work of Dr. Truett. Not long ago when I was in the office of Edward Titcher he showed me a card Dr. Truett sent him from Jerusalem. Mr. Titcher said:

"Many years ago my blessed mother fell quite ill. We

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did not think it possible for her to recover. We had a number of our best physicians attending upon her and they all said she could not get well. All of us were so distressed that we left word that none of us were to be called to the telephone. One night I was upstairs in my mother's room and all of us were quietly watching about her bed. The maid came quietly to the door and said: 'Mr. Titche, Mrs. Truett wants to speak to you on the telephone.'

"Of course, I could not resist that call, so I went to the telephone, and here is the message the good preacher's wife gave me:

" 'Mr. Truett has just come out of his study, where he has been engaged in prayer for your mother's recovery. He wanted me to call you and tell you that he was making special petition for her, and that he was also praying for you all.' "

With deep emotion Mr. Titche continued:

"That night my mother turned for the better. She got well. She remained with us for five happy years thereafter and none of us can ever forget the love and prayers of Dr. George W. Truett which came to us in such waves of blessing while we waited about what we thought was the deathbed of our precious mother."

While on this point I relate another incident. Not long ago a representative of the *Ladies' Home Journal* came down to Dallas to write a character sketch of Dr. Truett. He was a bonnie Scotchman named MacDonald and finding that he was in the city and feeling that I might be helpful to him in the preparation of this sketch, I asked him to lunch with me and we went down to the lunchroom of Sanger Bros. As we came away from the table we met Alex Sanger and I introduced him to Mr. Sanger, telling Mr. Sanger at the same time Mr. MacDonald's

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mission to Dallas. At once Mr. Sanger entered into conversation with the visiting journalist and said:

"I count Dr. Truett one of the dearest friends I have on earth. I know that at any hour of the night if I needed him he would come to me, and he knows that if he ever needed me at any time, in any way, that I would come to him. All of us in Dallas, of every creed, and every faith, devoutly love him."

In the same article, Dr. Cranfill related the following striking incident which speaks volumes as to the esteem for Dr. Truett:

It is interesting, the manner in which the general denominational work of the Baptists has been carried forward through the years. Like all the religious fraternities, the Baptist denomination always needs a line of bank credit through which to finance its increasing and enlarging activities. Time out of mind this credit at the bank for the Baptist State Executive Board was stabilized by a blanket guaranty, signed by a number of our Texas Baptist laymen whose bank credit was high. There are some difficulties pertaining to matters of this kind not necessary to recite here. Suffice it to say that, upon a time not long ago, when the Executive Board needed a larger line of credit and new and larger indorsements, it seemed somewhat difficult to secure this advance line through an increase of the number of personal indorsers.

It was all settled, however, in a very simple way. When the corresponding secretary of our Executive Board went to Nathan Adams, president of the American Exchange Bank, to establish this new and larger line of credit Mr. Adams was asked what security or indorsement he would need in order to accord to the denomination this accom-

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modation. He asked the secretary if Dr. George W. Truett would sign the paper. Receiving an affirmative answer, he said:

"There will be no limit to your line of credit at our bank so long as the paper is indorsed by Dr. George W. Truett. He is all the security we need."

Pastors of all denominations in Dallas have expressed their high appreciation of Dr. Truett. He has received many letters from them, expressing sincere sentiments similar to those contained in the following:

FIRST CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Corner Beacon Street and Ash Lane

Dallas, Texas

June 1, 1936

MY DEAR DOCTOR TRUETT:

I feel constrained to send you this word of personal appreciation of your life and your message. Mrs. Allen and I were present this morning to listen to your most heartening message. We seemed to feel the throbbing of your own heart as you made us realize, anew, that we are marching on to certain victory.

I am pastor of one of the smaller churches of Dallas. Only once have I been privileged to clasp your hand. Yet I am not a stranger to you and the beautiful work you are doing for our dear Lord. I feel that my own life is richer, as must be the life of every pastor in Dallas, for having you in our midst.

May God bless you, Dr. Truett. We all love you. I know that you are busy, and I do not expect you to send

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any reply to this letter. But when you talk to the Father I will appreciate it if you will remember me.

Sincerely yours, in the bonds of Christian love.

M. F. ALLEN.

Dr. Truett is a notorious "easy mark" for beggars of all kinds. He is so fearful lest he fail to help some worthy person in need that he often becomes the victim of rank impostors. His assistants and deacons try to shield him all they can. But, nevertheless, numbers of people reach him with their tales of woe. It is well nigh impossible for him to refuse to help those who ask it of him. He seems to take quite literally the words of Jesus, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."⁷ His church members and his fellow-citizens have sometimes chided him for being so generous in giving money to people who may not deserve it. But, he always replies that "the only good of money is to do good with it."

For many years George Truett has had an unusually good income for a preacher, but he has given it away as fast as it has come to him. He has never felt that he should store up treasures upon earth. His only savings are in the form of a moderate amount of life insurance and a superb library—he built a special addition to his house several years ago to contain his numberless books. He has probably been one of the largest contributors to the First Baptist Church since the financial crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression reduced the income of most of the wealthier members of his church.

⁷ Matt. 5:42.

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His church, about twenty-five years ago, bought a choice lot in the Munger Place addition, and built a splendid house for their beloved pastor and his family. This was so deeded to him and Mrs. Truett that he could not give it away. Texas homestead laws are very strict. The church made it quite clear that they wanted the Truetts to make their home in Dallas as long as they lived. Repeatedly the church has sought to increase his salary but he has usually vetoed their proposals. He has insisted that his salary be kept at a relatively modest figure. But the church has found other ways of helping to relieve the financial drain which is ever upon him. Without any flourish of trumpets they do many gracious and thoughtful things for their pastor in order that he may not be unduly handicapped in his globe-encircling ministries. For example they contribute generously, though privately, for his travelling expenses on his extended preaching trips abroad; they make an annual appropriation of from six to eight hundred dollars for his library so that he may buy the books he loves; when he went overseas in the World War, certain friends took out a generous insurance policy on his life, payable to his estate, and paid up the premiums for some years; they make it possible for him to send out thousands of his Christmas Messages to friends all over the world every year—an expensive undertaking, but one that gives him special delight.

To the writing of his Christmas Messages he gives most careful and prayerful thought. They are much more than the usual "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" greetings. They are real messages into

which he packs much of good cheer, optimism, faith, comfort, wholesome philosophy, and challenge to glorious Christian living, all expressed in characteristic Truett phraseology which never fails to emphasize the goodness of God, the greatness of Christ and the glory of service. Year after year, the Dallas newspapers print his Christmas Message in full, devoting an entire page to it. In 1929 the author assembled Dr. Truett's Christmas Messages for the nineteen years preceding and published them in a little volume entitled, *These Gracious Years*. In his "Introductory Word" to this unique volume Dr. I. J. Van Ness said: ⁸

They represent the mental, moral, and spiritual growth of this rarely useful preacher, who is at the same time a loving pastor. Throughout runs the one continuous strain of unfaltering confidence in the purposes of God, in the leadership of Jesus as the Divine King, and in the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit. They tell of an unchanging gospel in a changing age.

These messages come from a heart of faith and will be welcomed for the note of confidence and assurance which they bring to us all, not only as messages for Christmas time, but as messages for all the days of the year, as we live and love and labor.

One excellent evidence of the abiding esteem in which Dr. Truett is held by his church and city is the manner in which they attend the annual evangelistic meetings which he conducts each April in his own church for about two weeks. Noon-day services are

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held for fifty minutes in a theater located in the heart of the retail business district. The night services are in the main church auditorium. Frequently the seating capacity of neither theater nor auditorium is adequate to accommodate those who attend.

The following item from the *Dallas News*, April 5, 1938,⁹ gives some idea of the popular response of the Dallas public at a noon-day service in a theater:

RICH, RAGGED MEET AS THEATER BECOMES HOUSE OF GOD

Busy workers of Dallas crowded the Palace Theater Tuesday at noon to hear Dr. George W. Truett plead that they embrace Christ and His Teachings. It was the second of five Holy Week luncheon hour services to be conducted by the head of the Baptist World Alliance. In a deep hush, although only a few feet from clattering Elm Street, gray, intense Dr. Truett warned that delay in seeking God is the greatest tool of Satan.

While theater attendants hustled in the lobby, preparing for the opening of this week's picture, an hilarious comedy, a crowd as strangely assorted as office buildings and stores could disgorge, listened.

Pretty stenographers rubbed elbows with elderly women shoppers. Clerks and bookkeepers trod on the toes of executives. Uniformed waitresses made room for city officials. Socialites mingled with those whose clothes were ragged. There were Jews, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and many other denominations thickly strewn among the Baptists.

Noon saw the theater rapidly filling. In fifteen minutes

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ushers were hard put to find seats, and still the crowd came. Late arrivals trickled in until the benediction at 12:50 P. M.

Many came for only the few minutes they could snatch between a hurried luncheon and time to return to their offices.

George Truett Surprises His Friends

GEORGE TRUETT was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention at Louisville, Kentucky, in 1927 and re-elected at the Chattanooga and Memphis Conventions of 1928 and 1929 respectively. In 1899 he had delivered the Convention Sermon at Louisville. From that time on Southern Baptists had thought of him as an outstanding preacher and pastor but not as a presiding or executive officer. He had somehow always managed to avoid official positions in the denomination. He had served on many committees and boards of the Texas Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, but he had always induced the brethren to choose others for official honors and responsibilities. He had no ambitions whatever for such preferments. He was quite content to occupy the rôle of priest and prophet but had no desire for the kingly rôle of president of any organization. He spoke in utter truth and sincerity upon his election at Louisville when he said: "I appreciate this honor, but from my deepest heart I had hoped it would never come to me."

Many of his closest friends frankly questioned the wisdom of thrusting him into a position for which he had no special talents or training. They knew that he was not a parliamentarian and that he had never par-

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ticipated in, nor had much patience with, the convention debates which grew out of the technicalities of parliamentary procedure. The talents and tastes of some men run in that direction. Not so with George Truett. And his friends knew it. Frankly they feared that the office of President of the Southern Baptist Convention would be an embarrassment to him and that it might somehow hurt him and detract from his reputation among Southern Baptists as preacher and spiritual leader.

Many articles and editorials in the Southern Baptist press, having confessed this half-formed fear, went on to express delighted surprise at the way President Truett took hold and guided the Convention. For example, A. J. Holt wrote the following in the *Florida Baptist Witness*:¹

Dr. George W. Truett, the distinguished preacher, succeeded Dr. McDaniel. Some of us regretted his nomination, knowing his great attraction and fame as a preacher and were apprehensive lest this latter elevation might not work for the best as a preacher, and as for the two positions, the preacher were the better. But we were all disappointed—most agreeably. No man living or dead, could possibly have surpassed Dr. Truett in his rulings at the late session of the Convention. He was a prophet, priest and king, of course in a modified sense. No one ever has preserved order in the midst of excitement and confusion, and done so with such evident fairness, with the manifest desire to serve all the brotherhood. Perfectly fair, perfectly self composed, pleading most earn-

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estly for order, amidst confusion, he succeeded as no other man had ever done. He sent the brethren home with greater love for each other, greater love for the Master, and unintentionally with greater love for our peerless presiding officer. When shall we ever have another like unto him.

The Watchman-Examiner featured this notice by Curtis Lee Laws:²

We have never thought of Dr. George W. Truett as a great presiding officer, but at the recent Southern Baptist Convention and the more recent World Alliance he won rich laurels for himself in this capacity. This can easily be accounted for. His fine presence, his extraordinary voice, his evident sincerity, and his passionate earnestness make him a moderator of whom all are proud and whose decisions no one would question. Let it not be forgotten, however, that primarily Dr. Truett is not a presiding officer or a denominational manager, but a preacher of God's Word. We hope that he will do less and less denominational work, which lesser men can do, and more and more preaching, which no other man can do as he does it.

Dr. Truett did a wise thing at Louisville after he had been elected president. He invited all the editors of the religious press to a breakfast at which he freely discussed with them Convention matters and sought to impress them anew with a sense of the tremendous responsibility which was theirs to mold the thoughts of

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their readers along lines of unity and progress. He gave such a breakfast each year during his presidency, and succeeding presidents have followed his precedent with happy results.

In those several conferences with representatives of the religious press while he was President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and following his election as President of the Baptist World Alliance at Berlin in 1934, Dr. Truett emphasized the trusteeship of the editors as he reminded them of their unique opportunities to lead and inspire the churches. He pointed out that these journals were to be the spearheads of all the denominational efforts. Furthermore, they were to be unifying rather than divisive factors in the life of the denomination. Their pages should furnish a forum for free and frank discussions of all appropriate and constructive subjects. He expressed the belief that the sun of the denominational paper was rising rather than setting; that the day of its greatest usefulness was ahead rather than past. He suggested that the editors and their boards would do well ever to remember the motto of the *Manchester Guardian*: "Opinions are free; truth is sacred."

The way Dr. Truett presided over the 1928 sessions of the Convention at Chattanooga called forth universal praise. Any lingering doubts as to his ability as a presiding officer were wholly removed. And when a few days later he was called upon to preside over the Baptist World Alliance at Toronto, in the absence of President E. Y. Mullins, who was kept away by ill-

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ness, his praises were sounded throughout Canada and other nations as well as the United States. The *Christian Index* had this to say of Dr. Truett's ability, in its editorial of May 24, 1928, following the Chattanooga Convention:³

Everyone who attended the Chattanooga convention will agree, we believe, that Dr. Truett proved himself a master in the difficult role of presiding over so vast an assembly involved in such tense and prolonged discussion. He does not assume to be expert in parliamentary practice. He frankly said so a number of times, during the convention. But he handled that convention with surpassing ability. His powerful personality, surcharged with the one consuming passion to do the will of God, took hold of the great throng. Men and women felt the impact of Dr. Truett's great heart as he sought to hold the convention to the main business of finding out what was the right thing every step of the way.

Livingston Johnson wrote this comment in *The Biblical Recorder*:⁴

President Truett was eminently fair in all his rulings, and gave the humblest man on the floor the same consideration that he accorded to the best known delegate. He did more than any president we have yet had to preserve order. This he did by earnest insistence that we maintain the same reverence in the Convention hall that we would if attending service in a church. He emphasized the spiritual side of our work, and in so doing lifted the Convention to a higher spiritual plane.

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The *Western Recorder* made this further comment, the following month: ⁵

President Truett is not a great parliamentarian. He makes no such claim for himself. Yet the most astute parliamentarian has never been able to keep the Convention busy at its work as did he. His affable manner, his desire that each one have a chance to express himself, produced such a spirit of fellowship and confidence that no great parliamentary battles arose. He refused to allow even an intimation that anyone acted otherwise than in good faith. His firm stand at this point kept the attention of the Convention upon the issues involved and not upon personalities and minor issues.

Following the Toronto meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in 1928, Charles R. Brown wrote this editorial in *The Baptist Times*, of London: ⁶

Dr. George W. Truett, who was called to the chair in the lamented absence of Principal Mullins, is a born leader of men and master of assemblies and a great orator. Never in my life have I seen a more commanding personality. The way he managed and marshalled that vast assembly, keeping perfect order, and holding people to the end of each session, awoke everybody's admiration. He was equal to every occasion. He had to read President Mullins' address, and everybody felt that the address lost nothing of its power by the wonderful delivery. After all the trying sessions, on the Thursday afternoon at a garden party he stood for some two hours, with others, receiving the guests in the great heat, and when I ex-

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⁶ Reprinted by permission.

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pressed sympathy with him he declared that he was accustomed to hard work and he did not get tired.

It was fortunate that Southern Baptists had the official and spiritual leadership of Dr. Truett during the trying years from 1927 to 1929. At the beginning of his administration, the denomination was suffering from the partial failure of the Seventy-five Million Campaign. Expansions, based on pledges which did not materialize, had resulted in a multitude of embarrassing debts. Criticisms and even recriminations were rife. And right in the midst of this came the Carnes defalcation of Home Mission Board funds. It became a serious question as to whether or not the morale of the people could be maintained in the face of the spiritual decline which had beset the nation in general and the tragic circumstances which had assailed Southern Baptists in particular.

A steadying hand was needed, a trusted voice that could inspire confidence. A personality poised upon steadfast foundations was a necessity.

For months following the Carnes tragedy, Dr. Truett travelled over much of the South pleading with his brethren to stand fast and be faithful to Christ in that time of deep distress. In a heart-to-heart talk with the Baptist editors he said:

Not a day has passed since this awful Carnes tragedy occurred that it has not been like some black shadow on my heart; but brethren, my faith in God has not failed even for one moment, and in some mysterious way I believe that good will come out of it all, for I know

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that God can make even the wrath and folly and sin of men to praise him. This is the time of all times for us to trust in our great, good Saviour and go forward in the might of his strength. Let us humble ourselves before him, confess our sins, implore his forgiveness and seek the wisdom of his counsel. And furthermore, brethren, I believe in, even as you believe in, the fundamental integrity and honesty and uprightness of purpose of my beloved fellow-Baptists. The hearts of this mighty host of Christ's followers are sound and they desire to do that which is right in God's sight. I believe these things to be true of the vast and overwhelming majority of our people. We must not take counsel of our fears, but we must go forward in confidence, girt about with faith in God and faith in our fellow Christians.

As the time of the Memphis Convention (1929) drew near, Dr. Truett was greatly troubled. He knew that above all else it was important that his people be summoned to earnest prayer and to renewed spiritual emphasis. The following prayer of his for the approaching Memphis Convention was printed by the magazine, *Home and Foreign Fields*, some days before the Convention:⁷

Grant, O God, the consciousness of thine overshadowing power and presence as we meet to seek thy will and to do thy will. Without thee we can do nothing. Except thou be with us all our plans and deliberations will be in vain. With thy help we can do all things.

Help us to gather in such spirit, Our Christ, that thou canst honor thy promise to be in our midst. May all that

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we say and do be so truly in thy name that thou wilt give to us whatsoever we ask. Take from us all selfishness, all littleness, all pettiness, all self-seeking, all querulousness, all suspicion, all narrowness, all prejudice, all timidity, all faithlessness, all guile. Enable us to come with holy boldness to do business with and for thee, that thy Kingdom may come and thy will be done among men.

Come to our side, O Holy Spirit, to do thine office work—to comfort us in our distresses, to guide us into the truth, to teach us how to pray, to reveal Christ more perfectly to us and in us, to intercede for us with unutterable yearning before the Father's presence. We know that thou art more willing to give us thine endowment than we are to receive it, and we pray that thou wilt so brood over us during these momentous days that our hearts will open to thee as the flowers to the summer sun.

May we put first things first. May we abide in the shadow of the cross. May the sigh and sob, the heartache and heart-break, of a lost world come to our ears with more insistence than the hum of machinery and the clink of money. May no program devised by men take precedence over the purpose proposed by Christ. May no jangling discords of needless debates drown out the quiet voice of the Master as he says to us afresh, "All authority hath been given unto me. . . . Go ye therefore and make disciples."

Help us to walk worthily of our Christian calling, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Make us to realize that we are the light of the world, the salt of the earth, ambassadors of Christ, living epistles known and read of all men. God grant that our light shall not be darkness, that

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our salt shall not lose its savor, that we shall not be found false witnesses of thee!

Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, our Rock and our Redeemer. In Jesus' name. Amen.

At Memphis Dr. Truett was unanimously elected President of the Southern Baptist Convention for the third time, no other nomination being made. Here is a brief quotation from an editorial which appeared in a May issue of *The Canadian Baptist*:⁸

Dr. Truett, the "best loved man in the South," is again President of the Southern Baptist Convention. Southern Baptists love this tried leader and true servant of God and man, and they could not find anyone anywhere better fitted to preside over their works. Canadians are delighted with the repeated honoring of one whom they know well and love sincerely.

J. H. Rushbrooke contributed the following article in *The Baptist Times*, of London:⁹

The Convention had assembled under conditions of peculiar difficulty, with serious financial problems to face, and a tension of feeling regarding Home Mission Board affairs that might easily have led to disastrous action. It owed an immense debt to its President, Dr. Truett, whose opening address was a masterpiece of eloquence charged with spiritual power. Without a single direct reference to the special questions that would arise, he secured from the outset the atmosphere and attitude

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⁹ Reprinted by permission.

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in which right decision was certain. No one who attended the World Congress in Toronto needs to be told that Dr. Truett is a unique presiding officer as well as one of the greatest preachers that has ever appeared among Baptists. The admiration and love of his brethren give him an authority in his own Convention that insures orderly procedure even when feeling is strongest. The Convention was worthy of its leader. I was impressed, especially during the Home Board debate, by the sense of responsibility which dominated these thousands of delegates, the fine quality of the speaking, and the firm determination of the great majority to resist drastic changes under the influence of panic or of resentment at unhappy incidents of administration. Indeed, this Convention appeared to me one of the healthiest—though far from the most buoyant—I have ever attended.

The experiences gained by Dr. Truett as President of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1927 and 1928, prepared him for his skillful handling of the Baptist World Alliance at Toronto, as a substitute for Dr. Mullins. And the impression he made upon the Baptists of the world at Toronto practically assured his election as President of that body at Berlin in 1934.

South American Good-will Tour

DR. AND MRS. TRUETT visited South America in the summer of 1930. They went in response to urgent invitations from Southern Baptist missionaries in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, to visit their lands on an evangelistic mission. The immediate occasion of the trip was the first Latin-American Baptist Congress in Rio de Janeiro, at which, on June 22-29, over four hundred delegates were assembled from the Latin lands of Mexico in the north to Argentina in the south.

At New Orleans, in May, Dr. Truett had joyfully relinquished the gavel of the Southern Baptist Convention to his able successor, Dr. W. J. McGlothlin, President of Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina. His three-year term as President of the Convention had been a heavy burden to Dr. Truett, and he was glad to get away for a two and a half months' preaching mission in South America. One of his daughters said to him after the New Orleans Convention:

"Papa, don't you feel as though you had turned a bird loose, now that you are no longer president?"

"Daughter," he replied, "I feel as though I had turned a hippopotamus loose. In fact, I feel just like a boy after school lets out."

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Several other Southern Baptists travelled with the Truetts on the South American trip and added much to the value of this good-will tour. Miss Kathleen Mallory, long-time Corresponding Secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union, Mrs. Una Roberts Lawrence of the Home Mission Board, Mrs. George W. Bottoms of Texarkana, Mrs. Jenkins of Louisiana, Dr. and Mrs. T. B. Ray of the Foreign Mission Board, and Mr. E. O. Sellers of the Baptist Bible Institute accompanied the party and won the admiration of the missionaries and people of South America whom they visited. Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, joined them and thus added to the international character of the good-will tour.

Dr. Truett's preaching mission began when he was pressed into service on shipboard between New York and Rio. Concerning this Mrs. Lawrence wrote:

We could take a whole page to tell of the trip down, the kindness and courtesy of ship officers and crew, the interesting fellow passengers and the many interesting things that happened, but the outstanding event was the Sunday morning services when Dr. Truett gave one of his greatest messages to one of the most "mixed" audiences he has ever spoken to—for the whole passenger list came, something that rarely happens so our Captain said. The Captain is a Virginia Baptist, but that audience ranged all the way from the Third Secretary of the Japanese Legation in Buenos Aires, who though now a Christian, is of Buddhist background to the leading Hebrew tragedian of the world today; one of the greatest aviators of the world and his wife, who is his navigator; gamblers, lawyers and

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business men—many of whom sought out Dr. Truett during the days that followed to confess their longing for such a knowledge of God as he showed was possible for men.

Continuing, Mrs. Lawrence, who was the unofficial reporter of the party, wrote of their welcome in Rio:

Then came our welcome into Rio—and such a welcome! More than a hundred missionaries, American and Brazilian friends met us. Some of the Brazilian Baptists had gotten up at four o'clock that morning in order to be at the dock when our boat came in at seven. No one can ever quite realize how it made us feel to have them come to us with the joy shining in their faces, just happy because we had come to see them. The delegation from the Girls' School presented Mrs. Truett, Miss Mallory, Mrs. Bottoms and myself with bouquets of orchids, making a little speech to each of us in English.

We were taken in charge by Dr. and Mrs. Soren, of the First Church of Rio, which has the largest evangelical auditorium in Brazil, and for beauty and grace of line and finish, excels anything I have ever seen of its kind. With these marvelous hardwoods of Brazil to draw upon, there are floors of amazing parquetry, beautiful staircases of polished dark red and brown woods, seats of solid mahogany, polished with just the natural color of the wood brought out in shining beauty.

Writing in *The Baptist Times* of London, Dr. Rushbrooke reported on the Convention in part as follows: ¹

The assembly met in the First Church of Rio de Janeiro, a noble building which may be regarded as the

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Baptist cathedral of the South American continent. The pastor, Dr. F. F. Soren, a native of the country, was unanimously chosen as President.

The fact that such a gathering has been held is significant of the remarkable advance of our denomination in Latin-America, and especially in South America, during the present century. In Brazil alone there are nearly 40,000 church members, as compared with less than four thousand in the year 1905. Over four hundred delegates were officially registered; at the largest meetings well-nigh 2,000 persons attended, and more than twice that number participated at various stages—apart from the numerous local meetings and services arranged in connection with the Conference.

Again Mrs. Lawrence wrote:

It was a clear starlit evening under the Southern Cross. For nearly an hour a steady stream of people had been pouring through the wide doorways of the beautiful First Baptist Church in Rio de Janeiro. Some with eager, happy faces. Others came curiously, sometimes hesitantly. For some it was the first time to enter a Baptist church door. They had come at the earnest invitation of friends or relatives. They sat down quietly, some with fear in their hearts as to the seriousness of this violation of the teachings of their religious leaders, the priests. . . .

Just as the service began that night, one of some ten nights that Dr. George W. Truett preached in Rio de Janeiro those memorable days in June, 1930, there came walking down the aisle to the very front a tall, distinguished man in full dress uniform of an officer of the Brazilian army. He gave most earnest attention to every part of the service, not joining in the songs, but in every

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other way showing the deepest interest from the very first. We thought he was one of the many upper class Baptists who belong to our Brazilian churches. But when the invitation song began, to our surprise he immediately went to the front.

Dr. Soren, the pastor of the church who interpreted for Dr. Truett, met him with outstretched hand, they talked a moment and then turned to Dr. Truett. The three stood with arms about each other and then the officer sat down with the others who had come forward, so many that the front seats all the way across the church would not hold them. Along with them was listed the name of this high officer.

"I do not understand it," he said humbly, "there is much you must teach me. But I know that Jesus is my Saviour, and him will I follow, no matter where that decision leads me."

From Rio the Truett party went to cities in northern Brazil—Bahia and Recife. Everywhere they went, they received a joyous welcome from the missionaries and the warm-hearted Brazilians. William Carey Taylor acted as interpreter—"Certainly one of the most sympathetic I ever had," said Dr. Truett. Interpreter Taylor wrote in an article entitled "An Ever-Memorable Visit":²

His four days here in the College in Recife were given to morning and evening sermons to the students and the public. Some seventy were saved, from all walks of life.

Here is a woman whose boy is saved. She upbraids him

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severely about it and comes, out of curiosity, herself the last night and is converted. She goes home and wins her husband to the Way he had joined her in denouncing, and the next morning he comes to the last service, at chapel hour, in his work-a-day clothes, and walks up among the students to confess Christ before men.

A sturdy dentist, who did post-graduate work in Harvard, comes to Christ, one night. Next night he walks forward with his timid boy, in the spirit of him of old who said, "As for me *and my house*, we will serve the Lord." He has already been baptized.

Of a service in Recife, Mrs. Lawrence wrote:

It was a quiet crowd, though so packed that there was no room to pass, no room to stir on a seat. The well trained choir sang glorious songs of the gospel, and then Dr. Truett arose to speak, Dr. W. C. Taylor standing by his side as interpreter. Through all the experiences up to that night, Dr. Truett had been conscious of the difficulty of speaking through an interpreter. He forgot it that night. He forgot himself. He was literally, utterly lost in his message, and preacher and interpreter spoke as one man. It was the greatest hour I have ever known for the sheer power of the spoken message of the gospel.

I never knew how many accepted Christ that night. I doubt if they ever fully counted them. At the invitation there was a surge in the crowd, and the tide swept forward, until it seemed that the entire listening crowd wished to show some sign of their decision. I do well remember the shining face of that woman, who with two sleeping children in her arms made her way forward to the great preacher. I remember another shining face, a well dressed man, with a fine face. They told me he was

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one of the outstanding men of the city. Rich and poor alike gave a response to that message that kindled again our own hearts and renewed our own vows of allegiance to our Lord. Many of them knew only what they had heard that night. It had been the complete message of salvation for many souls. None perhaps fully understood, but the amazing thing was that they had taken the decisive step, as far as they knew. The missionaries and Brazilian pastors would complete the teaching. That is a regular part of their work in Brazilian churches, as it should be among us.

Sao Paulo, 1,600 miles away in South Brazil, was the next stopping place for the Truett party. Mrs. Lawrence, faithful to her volunteer reporting, wrote:

One last scene. It is the beautiful, wide, airy, auditorium of the Girls' School in Sao Paulo, Brazil. No one who sees that building can help a thrill of joy over such victorious evidence of the achievements on the foreign field of the Seventy-five Million Campaign. Dr. Truett is preaching on his last morning to the girls of the school, the Baptists of the city and their friends. The auditorium is filled. Many are there who have never heard the gospel before. Many girls are in that audience who are in a Baptist school their first year. Many of them have been sitting through the chapel services with their fingers in their ears that they may not hear the Word of God read and thus violate their pledges to their confessors. One of these lovely girls is now sitting with intent eyes upon the speaker. Dr. Truett is speaking simply, clearly, but very forcefully of Jesus Christ, the Saviour from sin.

The message was ended. The preacher was standing quietly and gave the invitation, but he was not permitted

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to finish. As he spoke there came an interruption. That lovely Brazilian girl, daughter of a high official in the state, who had for months sat with her fingers in her ears that she might not by any chance hear the words of the Bible, was standing in the midst of the crowd, standing with tears streaming down her face.

"I believe," she said with a voice that rang with earnestness, "I have tried to not see that this is the truth. But I can resist no longer. I believe in Jesus. I believe he is my Saviour."

The audience was stirred as by the living flame of a Pentecost. The song began. From the crowd came men and women, young men and young women with shining faces, radiant through tears, many of them, confessing Jesus as Saviour, while in the midst stood that lovely young woman, knowing well she faces persecution, perhaps even ostracism from her home, but happy beyond the power of words to describe, for as Truett preached she had found Christ!

After Sao Paulo they visited Montevideo in Uruguay and Buenos Aires, the mighty city of Argentina. Rev. William A. Brown, D.D., Pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church—"The American Church"—Buenos Aires, wrote a wonderful account of their visit to his city, entitled "Triumphs of Redeeming Grace," published in *The Baptist Standard* of Dallas, Texas, from which the following excerpts have been taken:³

"I am loath to close the appeal," said the impassioned voice so well known in America and now sounding in Argentina in the closing session of the Mission in Buenos

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Aires: "I am loath to close. While we sing one more stanza, is there yet another who will decide for Christ?" And on that appeal from the far end of the large Prince George's Hall a young man came out of the crowd and walked steadily down the long aisle to take his stand with Jesus Christ. For a half hour the people had been coming forward, and the scene was unprecedented in the history of Missionary work in Argentina.

Dr. and Mrs. George W. Truett came ashore in Buenos Aires early Tuesday morning, July 29, 1930, to be greeted by the Rev. Robert F. Elder, president of the River Plate Baptist Association, the dean of missionary leaders in this vastly important world city, and many other Christian workers who had been with great joy anticipating their coming. These notable workers from America were welcomed most heartily and were so much at home that their mission was crowned with blessings bountiful and beautiful from the very first.

The dominant evangelistic note which is always sounded in his every service to the glory of the Redeemer was struck in the public reception which was tendered to Dr. and Mrs. Truett at the Baptist College. The Gospel message of "Ye must be born again" was good to hear, and it was good for us all—missionaries, pastors, professors, students, friends—and the message is so illustrated in the life of the pastor-preacher that it made an afternoon tea and a public reception into a service of transforming power and redeeming grace.

The first five days were devoted to services in the strategically located Baptist churches and were for the local congregations of Spanish-speaking members and friends; all services were evangelistic, and in every service the appeal for decisions was made; and always there

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were glorious commitments to the Saviour, many hundreds confessing Christ during these first days.

Wisely the leaders in the River Plate Baptist Association planned to climax the mission of Dr. Truett in four wonderful meetings in Prince George's Hall, Sunday afternoon, August 3, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday nights following. Such crowds of interested listeners, and their interest and their attendance were richly rewarded of course in the messages they heard, which were interpreted in a most convincing manner, in a most understanding way, by the Rev. Robert M. Logan, highly prized Baptist missionary of the cross of Christ. In the Sunday afternoon service Dr. Truett preached a sermon of convicting power, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" and in response to his closing appeal scores stood in loving acceptance of the Saviour of us all.

The crowds on Monday and Tuesday nights were beyond all expectation. In the midst of the city's coldest weather, with the hall unheated, still they came: crowds of people, and on both nights scores on scores of people stood confessing their desire to lead the Christian life and to be known as the followers of the Lord Jesus.

Then came the last day of the feast, and it was a great day. Wednesday, August 6, will be a red letter day in the calendar of many hundreds of people. It was such a heavy day: four services all told, and each service was so distinctive: the consecration service for all Christian workers in the morning, the sermon to the American business men at noon, the wonderful meeting of the women in the afternoon, and the glorious and triumphant service in the evening.

Prince George's Hall could not contain all the people who crowded to the closing service. Everywhere a chair could be placed it was occupied; and then along the sides

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of the hall, and out into the vestibule, and all over the gallery the crowd gathered. "Who is on the Lord's side?" was the theme for Dr. Truett's last message in the mission; and at his appeal the people pushed out of the crowded spaces and made their way down the center aisle. They came in unending waves it seemed, and before our eyes we saw scenes of unexampled splendor. For thirty minutes it continued, and one who thought at first to count the number who came was so absorbed in the view of the stream of converts that he forgot the number and it is just as well for they were all noted down in heaven. What must have been the rejoicing over there? Some of it was matched with the rejoicings here.

Mothers came with their children, grandmothers with their grandchildren. They came by families, they came by classes of scholars, professors came with their students—a river of life was flowing that night.

And then came the "I am loath to close"—and who that has heard that word with the persuasive pathos in it has not felt as though it meant almost like the shutting of the door unless you yielded and to hear it again after these years is to feel like accepting all over again: "I am loath to close"—and then the stanza again; and, oh, the rich, the rich rewarding of the faith of the preacher, for away out yonder in the very outer fringe of the closely packed audience a young man with head high and step steady with fixed resolution came down the long, long aisle, and in that young man the leaders in the college recognized an outstanding student whom they had zealously sought for Christ. What a fitting climax to a Christ-like mission!

Dr. and Mrs. Truett were in Buenos Aires only nine days. It seems incredible that they could have done so much in so short a time. They did it to be sure because

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they gave themselves just to the one thing: the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. They religiously refused all social engagements; they even denied themselves the enrapturing delight of sight-seeing in this entrancingly beautiful world city, which they saw for the first time. As with St. Paul, they can truthfully say, "This one thing we did." They did lift up the Christ; they did proclaim his saving gospel; they did testify to his transforming grace; they did exalt the work of the church, and the membership in it. All loads are lighter since they have been here and put their strong sheltering selves under them. The Lord's song is sweeter than ever now that they have been here, for having been here we are confident that they will come again. The universal testimony of missionaries and other Christian workers is, as the result of their labors here, that each one of us in his own way wishes that he might begin all over again. Such is the creative power in their life-giving ministry.

"Triumphs of Redeeming Grace" were witnessed also in Santiago, Concepcion and Temuco, Chile. In Santiago, Dr. Truett preached the sermon at the ordination of a brilliant young Chilean as a Baptist preacher—a young man, Espinozo, who had graduated with highest honors in the leading University of Chile, and became the pastor of one of the three Baptist churches in Santiago, Chile's capital. This young man became a student in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, in 1938.

The trip across the Andes in the dead of winter was an unforgettable experience. After several strenuous and very cold days in Chile, the Truett party sailed for

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home via the Panama Canal. Between Callao (Peru's port for Lima) and Panama, Dr. Truett was again pressed into service on shipboard, this time to perform a wedding ceremony for two charming young people who had planned to be married in the States. But they decided they wanted Dr. Truett to marry them on shipboard. It turned out to be a very gala occasion sponsored by the ship's officers and attended by most of the passengers.

The South American Good-Will Tour demonstrated several things. It showed that the gospel as preached by Dr. Truett retained its power even when delivered through an interpreter. It gave Dr. Truett and his party a greater appreciation of foreign missionaries and their work. Especially were they impressed with the home life of the missionaries. Nearly everywhere they went they stayed in their homes rather than in hotels. And when these travellers returned to the United States, they spoke in glowing terms of their hosts and their families. Said Dr. Truett in Nashville before the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention:

It was my great joy to see many of our missionaries in South America, at close range and to be in their homes, and to greet their dear families. Mrs. Truett and I have had a joy in the families of our missionaries deeper, sweeter, more gracious and grateful than we ever imagined possible. We have never found more beautiful and orderly families in all the world. The blessed behaviour of the children, big and little, made our hearts sing day and

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night, wherever we went in South America. In every one of these homes they had daily, family prayers; every little tot and big tot is in his place, and it seemed as natural to them as the eating of bread or the drinking of water. Our joy in our missionaries, men and women, and in their children, is a joy deeper than our words can express.

This tour helped the missionaries of other denominations as well as the Baptists. And, best of all, it resulted in the conversion of many hundreds of people and the strengthening of the faith of thousands upon thousands of Christians in South America, not to mention those in the homeland who heard of the gospel victories being won in South America. This Good-Will Tour greatly promoted South American consciousness among Southern Baptists. Several other leaders—notably Drs. John R. Sampey, L. R. Scarborough, Charles E. Maddry and M. E. Dodd—have made evangelistic tours to South America and their ministries have been blessed with spiritual harvests.

And last, but not least, it made stronger the bonds of good will between the two great continents of the Western hemisphere, as did the visits of Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt and Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and other distinguished citizens of the United States. "Pan-Americanism" must be made more than just a happy phrase.

The following extract from an editorial in *The Word and Way* of Missouri, of March 26, 1931, which reported one of the regional meetings sponsored by the Foreign Mission Board gives a good account of a

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typical address by Dr. Truett, delivered in Kansas City, Mo., following his South American Good-Will Tour: ⁴

The climax of power and interest was reached in the evening when Dr. George W. Truett of Dallas, Texas, spoke at the Mosque to an audience of more than 5,000 persons. Dr. Truett gave a detailed account of his missionary tour in South America last summer. On this journey he preached eighty-eight sermons, eighty of them through an interpreter. Our brother's accounts of the immediate conversion of intelligent Brazilians who had never heard a gospel sermon before were thrilling beyond description. The writer sat where he could look into the faces of that vast throng and often it appeared that thousands of strong men were bathed in tears. For instructive delineations of the plan of salvation through Jesus, a person, and his atoning sacrifice on the cross; we say, with all deliberation, we have never heard such an elucidation of the real plan of salvation and such a moving, powerful discussion. One felt that he was being led again over a journey akin to those made by Paul.

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President of Baptist World Alliance

THE IMPRESSIONS Dr. Truett made on the Baptists of the world at Toronto practically assured his election as President of the Baptist World Alliance at Berlin in 1934. But, we need to go farther back than that, to the meetings at Philadelphia in 1911 and Stockholm in 1923. At the former he delivered an address which was cordially received. At Stockholm, he preached the "Alliance Sermon," entitled "An Adequate Gospel."¹ This sermon made a most favorable impression on the several thousand Baptists assembled there from some fifty nations. It is generally regarded as one of his greatest sermons. It may be read in *Follow Thou Me*. British Baptists said it made them think of Spurgeon's preaching. Perhaps that was one reason they chose Dr. Truett from among all the Baptist preachers of the world to deliver the principal address on the occasion of the "Spurgeon Centenary," in London, April, 1934. His address in the Royal Albert Hall on Spurgeon and his missionary sermon before the British Baptist Union won the enthusiastic plaudits of his English audience and resulted in their united advocacy of him for President of the Baptist World Alliance at Berlin, in August, 1934.

¹ Romans 1:16.

PRESIDENT OF BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

At the time of the Spurgeon celebration, Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke wrote in the *Missionary Herald* of London as follows:²

George Truett holds a unique position among Baptists. He has won in a superlative degree the trust and love of our world-wide communion.

Some persons might not adopt in every detail his theological opinions, but everyone recognizes in him a peerless preacher of the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ; a matchless evangelist who today, as through all his career, induces personal surrender to the Saviour; a strong, wise and tender counsellor, and a shepherd of souls. Wherever he is seen and heard he conquers. Who that was present at the Toronto congress can forget his majestic figure, the melody of his voice, the atmosphere created by his very presence?

In his own country, where for more than a generation Dr. Truett's goings out and comings in have been known to the widest public, no man commands such wealth of affection, in North as well as South, from black and from white. In the great State of Texas and the City of Dallas, so peculiarly his own, he is enthroned in a solitary splendor of trust and admiration to which I know no exact parallel. Envy itself, if it ventured to raise its head, would be forced to hide in shame, for Truett is Truett—a friend and brother, and the willing servant of all.

It is right that this man should be the world's spokesman on the occasion of the Spurgeon Centenary. He is Spurgeon's soul-mate, in a true sense his successor. His resemblances to his predecessor are many and striking.

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Like Spurgeon's, his doctrinal attitude is conservative, but who, listening to Spurgeon as I once heard him in the Metropolitan tabernacle, was inclined to ask theoretical questions or to enter upon critical analysis? Spurgeon presented the Christ of whom he himself was a bond-slave, and with that Christ we were brought face to face. Dr. Truett does the same: Through him his Christ speaks.

The fine quality of his voice, so that not one syllable is lost by any person among the crowded thousands in his great church, recalls to me the experience of listening to Spurgeon from the most remote seat in the uppermost gallery of the tabernacle. There is oratory, indeed, but also a simplicity of diction that finds its way to the heart and mind of the "unlearned and ignorant."

The achievements of the two men are also singularly parallel. Spurgeon's passion for social service has its permanent memorial in the orphanage, which perpetuates his memory and continues his work; in Dallas the fine Baylor Hospital, which has cost some 600,000 pounds, stands as an abiding memorial of its greatest Christian citizen. Spurgeon's work for education is today more adequately understood than aforetime; Truett is likewise an enthusiast for education, and the Baylor University at Waco, Texas, is not the only institution that owes its prosperity to his advocacy and support.

In winning the sympathy and cooperation of men of business and affairs and in inducing them to devote their resources to what Americans nowadays call "kingdom causes," as well as in surrounding themselves with strong deacons and other workers to sustain the varied activities of a great church, both men have achieved notable success. The parallels could be multiplied if space permitted.

I have seen and heard Dr. Truett in action in his own

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country and city, in Europe and in South America—where, despite the disadvantage of preaching through an interpreter he won the same response in conversions that has marked his whole ministry. I have talked with him in church and in hotel, on board ship and in his own home, and I know why men have given him the name I often heard, the “best loved preacher in the States.”

He is as gracious as he is strong. It is no surprise that a preacher of a very different type, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, should write of George Truett: “What we remember is not his theory but his experience, and we share and rejoice in the grand orthodoxy of the heart which makes his preaching so vital and compelling. When he tells of the love of God and the Saviourhood of Christ, he is irresistible.” Dr. Newton closes his tribute with the words: “One thanks God for every remembrance of such a man, whose ministry is a benediction to the world and a theme of thanksgiving in the whole church of God.”

It is significant that at Louisville, Chattanooga, Memphis, Toronto, and Berlin, George Truett was *unanimously* chosen to high office, no other name being put forward in nomination on those several occasions.

His election at Berlin called forth a flood of editorial approval in both the religious and secular press of America and other countries besides. Hundreds of writers expressed the thought that his selection was deserved, was wise and altogether fitting. For example, Dr. Howard B. Grose, long-time editor of *Missions*, published by the Northern Baptist Convention, wrote in November, 1934, as follows:³

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You cannot confine George W. Truett within the limits of a State, even though that State be the size of Texas. Dr. Truett is an American; but he is also a cosmopolitan. As a world citizen the Baptist World Congress at Berlin put its all-inclusive tag upon him. And I am free to admit for one that if I had to choose one man upon whom to confer a world title—one of all the ministers and men I have known—my choice would light upon this same honored head. What a gospel preacher he has been, not only in Texas but in scores of special meetings North and South and West! What a pastor he has been in Dallas! A church with a welcome for all! Year after year he has accumulated a unique influence and exerted a personal spiritual power quite unequaled anywhere.

I hope his great church will face the issue and do the large and generous thing. He should be given a sabbatical year at least in which to meet the special claims that will now be made upon his time and energy. Texas has had him for a lifetime. She owes something now to the outside world. Of course Dr. Truett would not ask for such self-sacrificing action, and I fear he might not sanction the suggestion. But that is exactly what I propose to his church here and now, in the name and for the exceeding benefit and blessing of multitudes of Baptists around the world who need the inspiration of his visitation.

Many others urged editorially that his Dallas Church release him for extended trips to other countries, especially to mission lands during his five-year term of office. It was suggested that as much as two out of the five years should thus be devoted to ministries in other

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countries than the United States. And just here it must be noted that his own church has shown a most generous attitude in sharing him with others. Not only have the members of his church consented to his going on extended trips, but they have seen to it that his travelling expenses were not made a charge against the Baptist World Alliance.

When Pastor Truett proposed to his people in the summer of 1935 that he should leave that fall on a six-months' tour of the mission fields of the Far East, they cheerfully assented and cooperated in every possible way. Only during the World War had he been away from them for as much as six months at one time. They felt that for him to go on a preaching mission to Palestine, India, Burma, China and Japan would mean as much for the kingdom of God as his ministry to the soldiers over-seas during the World War. Accordingly, he and Mrs. Truett left Dallas in November, 1935, for London, where they were joined by Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke, Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, who had carefully planned an itinerary. Several days were spent in England during which the Truetts were splendidly entertained. British Baptists assembled in large numbers to voice their appreciation, and to bid *bon voyage* to the Truetts and to Dr. Rushbrooke, before they sailed for the East.

The visits in Egypt and Palestine were without special incident. The travelers noted with satisfaction the good work being done by the missionaries in these fields. They visited the little church at Nazareth, whose

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pastor, the late Rev. Mosa, a native of Galilee, had been ordained some years previously in Dr. Truett's own church in Dallas. On a former visit to Nazareth, Dr. Truett and other tourists from Texas had provided the funds for the purchase of the grounds, upon which was erected the first Baptist Church house in the town where Christ lived. This building was the gift of Mrs. George W. Bottoms of Texarkana.

Going on to India, one day was spent in Bombay where Dr. Truett preached at an evening service. Then on to Secunderabad for two days and several addresses. Brief stops were made at various mission stations on their way to Ongole, South India, for the Centennial Celebration of American Baptist Missionary work in India. This proved to be a momentous occasion, lasting for three days, and attended by thousands from near and far.

The "South India" or "Telegu" Mission is world-famed. It was here that Dr. John E. Clough wrought with apostolic zeal and success. He and his fellow helpers baptized 2,222 professed believers in one day. The three-day celebration made a deep impression on the Truetts and Dr. Rushbrooke. They spoke of it as being "inspiring beyond words."

From South India they journeyed by easy stages to Calcutta, stopping to speak here and there at mission stations on the way. At Calcutta, they received a glorious welcome from the preachers and their churches in this mighty city of India. Here William Carey had engaged in his labors more than a century before and done much to shape the history of India. Dr. Truett

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delivered many addresses in Calcutta and in near by centers. He had one glorious day at Serampore College, founded by William Carey. Everywhere they turned in India, they were made conscious of the continuing influence of Carey, who was one of the world's mightiest missionaries.

Then several full and interesting days were spent in New Delhi, the Capital of India. He spoke there and in neighboring territory daily. In this section, as in all the others, they met practically all of the non-Catholic missionaries and enjoyed fellowship with them. The visitors, especially Dr. Truett, spoke in many of the schools and colleges, both large and small.

While in Calcutta, Dr. Truett spoke one morning to a large company of missionaries and others in the Thoburn Methodist Church, named in honor of Bishop Thoburn, one of the world's great Christian leaders. In speaking of this occasion, Dr. Truett said: "The testimonies of the missionaries heard that day will ever thrill and bless us."

The contrasts of amazing, mighty, mystical India made unforgettable impressions on the Truetts. Great wealth and still greater poverty, filthy streets and the gem-like Taj Mahal; British authority and Gandhi resistance, Hindu exclusiveness and ostracism of the "untouchables," Buddhist brooding, Mohammedan fanaticism and the simple fervor of the Telegu missions, these and many other contrasts registered strongly on the observing eyes and sensitive spirits of the visitors. They left imperishable impressions of "The Christ of Every Road," as they bore their witness concerning

Him in many parts of India. Many of the missionaries and Christian workers in India testified that the cause of Christ in that perplexing land was greatly blessed by their tour. Such testimony was given not only by Baptist workers in India but also by many of other Christian communions. Tangible evidence of appreciation took the form of numerous and beautiful souvenirs presented to the visitors.

Mrs. Truett's published articles in American papers, and especially her private letters from India gave many graphic descriptions and vivid details of that strange land, descriptions which were calculated to convince her readers that the book, "Mother India," was no exaggeration, even though it may have presented only a partial view of the country. Snakes, flies, vermin, nakedness of children, bare-footedness of the multitudes, public bathing, unspeakable filth, and gross idolatry, were in evidence on every hand.

Upon returning to America many stirring paragraphs about India appeared in the addresses of both Dr. and Mrs. Truett as they reported on their world tour. Once more, William Carey and his monumental work in India became an inspiration to American Baptists as Dr. Truett gave rapid and impassioned recitals of the missionary epic. It was the same when he spoke of the Telegu missions of South India. Southern Baptists, who have no mission work in India or Burma, were especially pleased to have Dr. Truett's first hand impressions of the great Christian victories won in Southern Asia by Carey and Clough and Judson and their successors through the years.

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The noble works of Christian missionaries in India and elsewhere have ever been an inspiration to Dr. Truett. No censorious word concerning the missionaries or their work on any foreign field has ever escaped his lips. He has always had for them praise, and only praise. "Rethinking Missions" was entirely too negative and destructive in its criticisms to suit him. He has always admired those faithful men and women who have gone forth to the ends of the earth as ambassadors for Christ. In him the missionaries have ever found a sympathetic friend and a valiant protagonist.

Burma owes as much to Adoniram Judson as India does to William Carey. Burma still bears the stamp of Judson. The Truetts sensed this fact on every hand and rejoiced in the evidences of the perpetuity of godliness as it was in Judson and the other pioneer missionaries of Burma. Every informed Baptist can but rejoice in the fact that the "father of modern missions" was William Carey; and that Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice were used not only to lay enduring Christian foundations in Burma, but also to arouse American Baptists to undertake foreign mission work and launch their vast system of Christian schools for the training of missionaries, preachers and other Christian leaders. All of this epic story surged through the souls of Dr. and Mrs. Truett during their weeks in Burma.

Concerning their experiences in Burma Dr. Truett wrote as follows:

The weeks spent in Burma were profoundly thrilling to us, as we beheld the romantic and glorious work of

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Adoniram Judson wherever we went. The triumphs of the missionary enterprise in Burma are almost matchless. What marvelous Christians were Judson and his wife!

We had glorious services in Rangoon, the Capital, and indeed, wherever we went in Burma. We attended one of the District Baptist Associations in Burma, which was held in a rudely constructed tabernacle, and for three days was attended by thousands. It was like some vast National Convention. The work of the Karen Christians was a revelation and an astonishment to us.

In our travels, we detoured one day, in order to visit the grave of Ann Hasseltine Judson, in Amherst. Wonderful woman! Inexpressible emotions filled our hearts as we stood by her grave.

In Burma we met many faithful Christians whose grandparents were converted under Judson's preaching, and became his faithful co-laborers in laying broad and deep Christian foundations in Burma. We left that land, after several weeks of intensive travel and speaking, to carry with us joyful and lasting impressions of the power of the gospel to conquer any people who will hear and heed its precepts.

Mrs. Truett was forced to spend about two weeks in bed in Rangoon on account of a tropical fever aggravated by the intense heat. She received excellent medical and nursing attention, and the sympathy and consideration of her missionary hostess, Mrs. Chaney, was that of a real sister. Dr. Truett spoke throughout Burma to many native congregations and was everywhere received most graciously by the missionaries of all evangelical communions. Because of Mrs. Truett's illness, they were delayed a week in Burma, but Dr.

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Rushbrooke went on to China. He cabled back from Singapore that Dr. and Mrs. Truett would be entertained in the home of the Methodist missionaries in Singapore, no Baptist mission work being maintained there. Happy was the fellowship in Christ which they had with their Methodist hosts in Singapore, England's Gibraltar of the Far East. It was Dr. Truett's great joy to have a service with these fellow Christians. However, because of the intense heat of Singapore, the Truett's were glad to embark for the cooler regions of China. Concerning their embarkation and trip from Singapore to Hongkong, Dr. Hugh Thomson Kerr, pastor of The Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa., wrote the author as follows:

Another memory takes me to the other side of the world. Mrs. Kerr and I were moving quietly in our visit to the mission fields from country to country and at Singapore we were waiting over in the midst of the heat of the Orient. Up the gangway came Dr. and Mrs. Truett, he was carrying a basket of flowers, the gift of missionaries to whom he was saying goodbye. He had come down out of Burma inspired by what he had seen but weary almost to death on account of strenuous travel and strenuous work. We talked together on the boat as we made our way to Hongkong. There was humor in his voice as he told how, after being at work night and day in a mission field, the missionaries would whisper to him as he left, saying: "Now when you go down to the next mission field don't let them overwork you. They will want you to go here and there but you know you are not as young as you once were and you must take care of

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yourself." Dr. Truett often got that advice but he never took it. He has been a tireless ambassador of his Lord. We thank God for him and take courage.

For many years Dr. and Mrs. Truett had dreamed of the time when they might be privileged to visit China, the greatest mission field in the world. Many were the Christian and personal ties which bound them to that country. Mrs. Truett's sister, Mrs. W. Eugene Sallee and her noble husband, "Gene" Sallee, one of the greatest of modern missionaries, had lived in China for twenty-six years. At Kaifeng, in Honan Province, the Sallees had built up one of the great mission centers of China, the thrilling story of which appears in Mrs. Sallee's biography⁴ of her husband. For years the Truetts had known many of the American missionaries who had gone out to China, many of them having gone from Texas and some of them from the First Church of Dallas.

The special occasion of their visit to China was the *Henrietta Shuck Centennial* which, having been celebrated in Virginia in 1935, was now to be celebrated in China in 1936. J. Lewis Shuck and his young bride, Henrietta Hall Shuck, both of Virginia, left America for China in September, 1835. A year later they began a work at Macao in South China which in a very real sense paved the way for all subsequent Christian missions in China. She was the first Christian woman missionary to China. She did not live long, but long enough

⁴ *W. Eugene Sallee—Ambassador for Christ*, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn.

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to be accorded a prominent place in the foreign mission hall of fame.

Dr. Truett had participated in the "Shuck Centennial" in Virginia in 1935. The Baptist women of Virginia volunteered to contribute \$1,500.00 towards the expenses of Dr. Truett's world tour, as President of the Baptist World Alliance, on condition that he would be their special representative at the "Shuck Centennial" in China.

In Canton they spent one week, speaking daily to large throngs. Many Baptist and other missionaries came to Canton from sections of South China, far and near, for that week with the Truetts and Dr. Rushbrooke. To these throngs in the great metropolis of South China, Dr. Truett preached Christ crucified and had the great joy of seeing many profess their new-found faith in Him as their personal Saviour. And it was the same way wherever and whenever he preached—in Shanghai, Kaifeng, Peiping, Poochow, Tsinan and other places.

On March 12, 1936, Dr. Truett wrote his assistant, Bob Coleman, as follows:

DEAR BOB:

We are due to arrive in Shanghai early tomorrow (Friday morning). We left Hongkong at midnight on the 10th. Prior to that, we had five days in Canton, in daily meetings. They were days of God's right hand. His gracious blessing crowned every service. Over 200 confessed Christ as their personal Saviour. Crowded throngs attended every service, wherever held, in Canton. The memory of these brief but inexpressibly glorious

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days in Canton will forever gladden and bless me. I was mightily reassured, in these services, concerning the Divine power that goes along with the preaching of Christ's gospel. Although I had to preach through an interpreter at every service, yet the saving power of God mightily accompanied the preaching of the Word. Never can I get away from the inspiration and blessedness of these five days in Canton!

Canton is a city of more than a million inhabitants, and our Baptist work there is large and influential. The nine Baptist churches, the hospital, the large school work that our Baptist people are doing there, all give the Baptists a profoundly significant influence on the city and far beyond. Students come to these services, from near and far, as do patients to the well conducted hospital. And the influence of the churches is pervasive and wide-reaching. After I had preached last Sunday morning some 1,200 tarried for the observance of the Lord's Supper! It was a sight to move the heart to the deepest depths. It was my sacred privilege to assist the Chinese pastor in the administration of this service. He is a man of excellent attainments, of beautiful Christian spirit, and of large influence in the city. The South China Mission is the outstanding mission of Southern Baptists. The labors of the noble former missionaries, conjoined with the labors of our present noble company of missionaries, give the South China Mission a large place in this great land of China. At the Canton meeting, many of the missionaries were present, and the fellowship and personal conferences with them were marked by much interest and manifest good.

Tuesday morning of this week, we left Canton early for Hongkong, reaching the latter place about noon. In the afternoon, we had a most impressive memorial service at the grave of Henrietta Hall Shuck—the first woman

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missionary to China. I gave a brief address, appropriate hymns were sung, Dr. Rushbrooke offered a most fervent prayer, after which beautiful flowers were laid on the grave, in the name of these several groups; viz., the Baptist women of Virginia, the W. M. U. of the South, the Foreign Mission Board, the Baptist World Alliance, and the native Baptists of China. It is blessed that renewed attention is now being given to the life and service of this young woman. She did not live long in years, but she lived much, and continues to live on and on, in her notably gracious and challenging life and service.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

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In Shanghai Dr. and Mrs. Truett were most graciously entertained in the home of the veteran missionary, Dr. R. T. Bryan, whose second wife is a sister of W. Eugene Sallee, who married Mrs. Truett's sister, Miss Annie Jenkins of Waco, Texas. For years Dr. Bryan was an intimate associate of Dr. Matthew T. Yates, a notable, Southern Baptist Missionary statesman who did so much to lay enduring Christian foundations in Central China. Dr. Yates was a financial genius as well as a wise missionary leader. He was an important factor in developing trade relations between China and America and, incidentally, he accumulated a considerable fortune, much of which he devoted to missionary purposes in the Shanghai area of China.

In this great international city are located the Baptist Publication Society of China and also Shanghai University, whose brilliant president, Dr. Herman Liu, was recently assassinated. Here also are a number of excel-

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lent secondary schools and many strong churches, with able pastors. Dr. Truett spoke to the students at the university and in a number of other schools. Likewise, he addressed large audiences in several of the churches. At the "Old North Gate Church," where he preached, the presiding pastor was the grandson of the first native pastor of that church.

From Shanghai they visited and preached in Ningpo, Shanshing, Hangchow, Soochow, Chinkiang, Yangchow, and Nanking, near which is located the impressive Memorial Tomb of former President Sun Yat Sen. At Nanking they met numerous government officials, with whom they were entertained at luncheons, and with whom they had conversations on religious and international subjects.

Mrs. Sallee came down from Kaifeng in Honan Province to meet the Truetts in Hsuehoofu and journey with them on much of the interior and North China tour, including some thrilling days at Kaifeng, where the Sallees had wrought so well.

In the prime of his remarkably useful life as one of the greatest Southern Baptist missionaries of modern times, Eugene Sallee died suddenly in Raleigh, N. C., of an attack of coronary thrombosis. Mrs. Sallee remained in America long enough to write the thrillingly interesting biography of her distinguished husband and then she returned to China to help carry on their wonderful work at Kaifeng in Honan Province.

At Kaifeng the Truetts were welcomed by a large group of missionaries and fellow church members. The Governor of the Province gave them a gracious recep-

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tion. Dr. Truett had an extended conversation with him about his spiritual welfare. The richest man in the Province attended the preaching services led by Dr. Truett and confessed Christ as his personal Saviour, side by side with others who were among the poorest and humblest of the community. Many deeply moving scenes and incidents marked practically all the preaching services in Kaifeng.

From Kaifeng they went to Cheng Chow for one very full day. Then came Peiping. For charm, romance, and haunting interest, this age-old capital city sustains its well deserved reputation. Here, as elsewhere, they saw the Confucian and Buddhist Temples, and observed several aspects of their worship. Here also they visited the great Medical Center, the gift of John D. Rockefeller to China, which is regarded as one of the greatest medical centers of the world. Their days in Peiping were filled with never to be forgotten sights and experiences.

From Peiping they visited Tsinan, Hwang Sien, Wielsien and Laichoofoo before returning to Shanghai. Everywhere in these North China centers they noted the mighty imprint of the lives and labors of Dr. J. B. Hartwell and Miss Lottie Moon. And because of that abiding influence they found it relatively easy to bear effective witness to the power of the gospel, although they had to speak through interpreters when they addressed native congregations.

Back at Shanghai, they made hurried preparations to go on to Japan. A tender, farewell service was held for them upon the eve of their departure.

The tour in China impressed Dr. Truett profoundly with the greatness and the glory of foreign mission work. He became convinced that China was the greatest of all mission fields and that the finest of all Christian missions was being conducted in that mighty nation. This conviction was expressed in numerous addresses and sermons he delivered upon return to America.

About two weeks were spent in Japan where he found less optimism and more confusion among the missionaries than in other lands visited. He was gratified to note the remarkable influence of Kagawa in Japan—Kagawa, who at that time was on a tour of the United States.

Gracious welcomes were accorded the Truetts and Dr. Rushbrooke everywhere they went in Japan. Among the centers touched by them were Nagasaki, Fukuoka, Kokura, Himeji, Osaka, Kobi, Kyoto, Yokohama and Tokyo. Many student bodies were addressed, and some churches were visited. Almost every waking hour in Japan was filled with opportunities for the three distinguished Baptist visitors, who were happy to testify for Christ here even as in the other nations they visited on their world tour. The cherry blossoms were at their best and helped to impress on the Truetts that Japan was the most beautiful land they had visited.

Conflicting emotions filled their hearts as they sailed from Yokohama, via Honolulu to San Francisco, from where they hurried on to St. Louis in time for the Southern Baptist Convention which was immediately followed by the Northern Convention. There was one

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joint session of the two Conventions which was addressed by Kagawa of Japan and Dr. Truett, when the vast auditorium was filled to capacity. It was a night session. Dr. Truett spoke last and, although the hour was quite late when he began, the vast audience of fourteen thousand paid him a wonderful tribute by remaining to the end to hear the epic recital of his tour of the mission fields.

The next signal service rendered by Dr. Truett, as President of the Baptist World Alliance, was in connection with the Luther Rice Centennial which was celebrated especially in South Carolina where Luther Rice died and was buried. Dr. Rufus W. Weaver, the scholarly and history-loving Baptist of Washington, D. C., was chiefly responsible for the revival of interest in the remarkable life and work of Luther Rice to whom American Baptists owed so much. Rice aroused in American Baptists a sense of obligation to undertake foreign mission work and to build educational institutions for the training of preachers and missionaries. He was a true Christian statesman. Judson in Burma and Rice in America formed a combination which changed American Baptists from a non-missionary or anti-missionary people into one of the great mission forces of modern times.

Dr. Truett was selected to deliver the principal address at the centennial of Luther Rice's death which occurred on September 25, 1835. The program was broadcast from Columbia, S. C., over a nation-wide radio hook-up. Not only American Baptists, but millions of others, learned of the heroic, pioneer labors

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and far-reaching influence of this largely forgotten man who did so much, from 1815 to 1836, to broaden the horizon of his own and other denominations in the United States.

In the fall and winter of 1936-37, Dr. Truett visited a number of America's leading cities in connection with the National Preaching Mission. Everywhere he went, he delivered warm-hearted, gospel sermons just as he does in his own pulpit or at the Southern Baptist Convention. Not once did he deviate from his life-long, Christ-centered preaching. He formed treasured friendships among the clergymen who made up the preaching teams of the Mission. They all honored him for his faithfulness to his message, though the emphasis of some of them was quite different from his.

No doubt the National Preaching Mission accomplished much good, but it did not reach its greatest possibilities, perhaps because undue emphasis was placed on organic church union, by some members of the Mission. Dr. Truett sensed what was happening, during the progress of the Mission, and frankly, though fraternally, challenged the wisdom of those who were disposed to decry denominational loyalty as one of the chief stumbling blocks of Christianity. According to Dr. Truett's thinking, there is no essential conflict between his denominational loyalty and his loyalty to Christ. Strengthen either and the other is correspondingly strengthened. He very earnestly believes that intelligent, personal conviction in religion is essential to strength in Christian character and to success in any form of Christian work. He holds to the immemorial

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position of Baptists that all true believers in Christ as their personal Saviour are saved and are his brothers and sisters in the common salvation, whatever may be their ecclesiastical communion. He rejoices profoundly in their fellowship and steadfastly does he maintain that the spiritual union of all true believers in Christ is now and ever will be a blessed reality. Often is he heard to echo Paul's blessed benediction: "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The following letter from the pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Church of Detroit, Dr. Merton S. Rice, who was an associate of Dr. Truett on the National Preaching Mission, reflects the feelings of his brethren of other communions toward Dr. Truett:

A diamond needs no credential. All that is needed is to let it stand in its own perfection. It carries its own proof.

For many years Dr. George W. Truett has been one of the noblest men the church of God on earth possesses. He is the real sample of church union. He belongs to us all. True we think sometimes of his being a Baptist but we think of him always as being a Christian.

I love him greatly. I admire him for his tireless loyalty to all the business of the Church Militant, and I hope to spend much of the forever of the Church Triumphant with him.

In the summer of 1937 Drs. Truett and Rushbrooke held "Regional Conferences" of Baptists in the following European countries: England, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Holland, Poland, Latvia, Hungary,

Rumania and Switzerland. In Rumania they sought to influence Government officials to adopt a more liberal attitude toward religious minorities, including Baptists, who had suffered many restrictions and persecutions in that country. They delivered to these high officials a very strong document setting forth a splendid statement of the principles of religious liberty. They also delivered orally to government officials their protest in behalf of religious minorities. Subsequent decrees promulgated in Rumania in 1938 clearly indicate that the pleas made by these Baptist world leaders were not wholly in vain.

These "Regional Conferences" were largely attended and did much to fortify and encourage the Baptists in these several countries, as they learned of the progress being made in other lands. Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke is perhaps the best informed leader in the world today as to Baptist World conditions. He is also a real diplomat and an invaluable asset to the Baptist World Alliance. It was his judgment, often expressed, that the "Regional Conferences" of 1937 were most timely and beneficial, in that they furnished forums for the widespread proclamation of the spiritual and democratic principles of his church.

In recent years, Drs. Truett and Rushbrooke have done much to promote Baptist fellowship throughout the world.

Evaluations

ANY comprehensive interpretation of George W. Truett and his ministry must of necessity deal with at least three facets of his many-sided life and work. Hence in these final chapters, we undertake to give some appraisals of him as preacher, pastor, and man of God.

Above all else, George Truett is known as a preacher and, doubtless, will be remembered chiefly as such. When all who ever knew him personally are dead and gone, people will still hear and read of this man who profoundly influenced the Christian world during the first half of the twentieth century. And he will be accorded this place in the hall of fame, not for profundity of thought, nor brilliance of rhetoric, nor originality of exegesis, nor cleverness of homiletics, but for his simplicity of language, singleness of purpose, force of delivery, depth of compassion, ability to reach humanity's heart and will, and power to exalt Christ as Saviour and Lord. It will be said of him as he said of Spurgeon: "The pulpit was his throne and he occupied it like a king."

Seeing, or reading about, the results of this man's preaching, people, very naturally desire to know something of the distinguishing elements in the preacher's

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personality and methods which may furnish at least partial explanation of such notable results. Therefore, examination must be made of the preacher's physical endowments, mental processes, moral consciousness, spiritual understanding and sermonie methods, in the hope that such study will shed some light on this prince of preachers.

George Truett inherited a sturdy body. He has never, so far as the records show, deliberately set himself to the developing of his physical manhood. He has never engaged in athletic sports, except for a few rounds at golf about 1925, when his weight was increasing faster than his doctor thought it should. He is no hunter, nor fisherman, nor gardener, nor household mechanic. He has never learned to drive an automobile. He may have mowed the lawn in the long ago, but that is doubtful. He has never learned to swim, though he has been seen to "go down the slides" with a mighty splash at the sea-side. He indulges in no "daily dozen" or setting-up exercises. In fact, he has had neither the desire nor the time for exercises designed for physical development or care of health. In recent years he has been a member of the Dallas Athletic Club where he frequently finds relaxation through strenuous massages; and often, during his meetings and hard campaigns, he receives vigorous treatments from osteopaths.

While he has never systematically done anything to build up his physique, on the other hand, he has never done things, which would tear it down. He is careful in his selection of food and does not hesitate to diet to an extent which may promote his highest efficiency.

His one dissipation is coffee. But he limits that to three or four cups a day. He does not smoke. He tried it once when he was a youngster and it made him so sick he has never tried it again.

Few men have ever worked harder than he. Had he not been possessed of magnificent physical powers, largely inherited from generations of clean-living ancestors on both sides, he could never have stood up under the gruelling pace he has maintained from early manhood.

Dr. Truett is nearly six feet in height and for some years has weighed about two hundred pounds. He is well proportioned, with unusually broad shoulders and a very erect carriage. All his movements suggest strength and balance. There is nothing in excess, and certainly nothing ornate about him or his attire. Physicians have recently told him that, organically, his condition is that of a man of fifty rather than of seventy years. Because of his stature and erectness he inspires confidence in an audience the moment he walks into a pulpit. To many, he preaches a good sermon before he ever opens his mouth to speak. Involuntarily, people say to themselves: "There is a fine specimen of physical manhood. He looks the part of a distinguished person."

In repose, his countenance appears solemn, almost to the point of sternness. There is a broad expanse of brow; high cheek-bones; well proportioned nose, slightly aquiline; wide and sensitive mouth, well-formed teeth; firm chin; muscular jaws; blue-gray eyes which, under provocation, flash like an eagle's, or under the contagion of spiritual vision seem to flash forth fire as from

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a furnace; pale rather than ruddy complexion; hair that used to be black, but now is silver white.

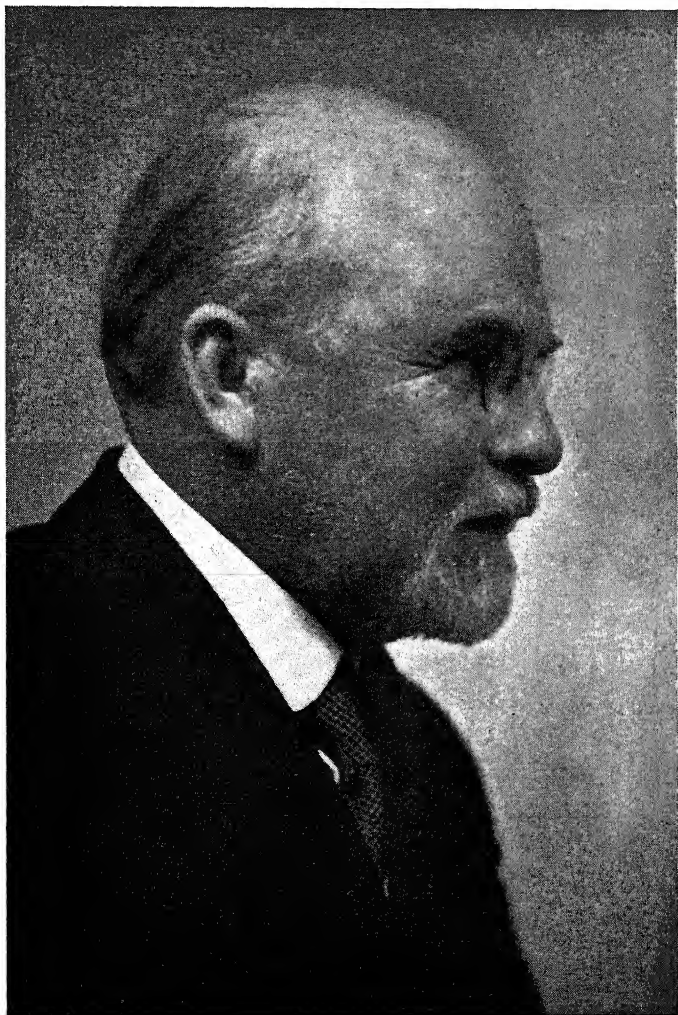
Honorable Hatton W. Summers, Congressman from the Dallas district, wrote these impressions of Dr. Truett:

The thing in my association and friendship with him which stands out most prominently is this: I went with him a long time ago to a Cowboy's Camp Meeting in West Texas. One day when interest was all that interest could be during Dr. Truett's sermon, he impressed me not as a man preaching, but literally as a messenger direct from the presence of God, speaking with all the certainty, assurance and authority with which such a messenger could speak. I do not mean any words he spoke indicated that. There was no claim. People felt it and saw it. To me he seemed literally transfigured. His face shone with a radiance and power which I have never seen on the face of any other human being. Other people were impressed the same way.

It is sometimes said that hands are good indexes of character. George Truett's hands harmonize perfectly with his personality. He is not given to gestures, but those he does make are as natural as breathing and sometimes more expressive than words.

The voice of Dr. Truett is his most remarkable physical equipment. All who have ever heard him preach will doubtless agree with this statement.

Some years ago a certain prominent actor who was distinguished for his excellent enunciation and the purity of his speech was passing along a Dallas street when his ear was attracted by the quality of a voice.



J. H. Rushbrooke

J. H. Rushbrooke, General Secretary of the
Baptist World Alliance



Dr. Rushbrooke and Dr. and Mrs. Truett in India
on their tour of the mission fields of the
Far East in 1936

He paused. He listened, fascinated. He thought: "I must find the man who owns that voice." He followed it and was led into a large church—the First Baptist Church of Dallas. He sat near the door and for a while, was oblivious to everything except the pure tones of George Truett's voice. But, before long, the thoughts expressed by the voice began to register with him. Spellbound, he stayed to the end of the service and then inquired the preacher's name. He sought an introduction and received a gracious greeting. His interest was to hear the man's voice in private conversation. To make a long story short, this actor, who had been a very worldly man, cancelled his engagements in other cities, stayed on in Dallas, heard Dr. Truett at every opportunity, was happily and genuinely converted and for more than a quarter of a century has led an exemplary Christian life. He has never ceased to be fascinated by the voice of Dr. Truett nor has he ceased to be grateful that he heard and followed his voice that day.

Writing of George Truett's voice in his superb article in *The Review and Expositor* of January, 1938, entitled, "George W. Truett, Preacher," Dr. J. L. Rosser of Jacksonville, Florida, said:¹

George Truett's voice—an inheritance—is a major factor in his equipment for public speech. It is unique. It does not fall into conventional oratorical categories. It has not the vibrant richness, wide compass, and rounded resonance that characterized the voices of Chatham, Bright, Gladstone, Bryan, Beecher, Spurgeon, Hawthorne, and

¹ Reprinted by permission.

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other great masters of pulpit and platform. It lies in the middle register, yet it is one of the most effective voices that ever went out upon the air.

Dr. John E. White, of Atlanta, once wrote of George Truett's voice thus: "A voice set to a very pronounced key of pathos—a cadence that individualizes his speech. Alas, for those who attempt to pilfer it!"

His voice never seems to tire, and one reason for this is that he knows how to use it. Its range is quite adequate for all practical purposes of public utterance, and its carrying quality is equal to the acoustical demands of the largest auditoriums or to huge open-air assemblies.

People rarely ever complain of not hearing Dr. Truett. Sometimes those who are hard of hearing have difficulty during his first few sentences, which, nearly always, are delivered in quiet conversational tones. And that is one reason why his audiences so quickly grow quiet and still.

Some time ago another preacher who, rightly or wrongly, is accused of essaying the Truett manner of speech, was addressing the Southern Baptist Convention on a subject in which the messengers were deeply interested. This brother prolonged his low tones too long. None save those on the front seats could hear what he was saying. Finally, a messenger far away in the gallery stood up and shouted: "Louder! Louder! We can't hear a word you say." Whereupon a big-voiced messenger, near the front, boomed out at the galleryite: "Well, thank God, and sit down."

It is nothing unusual for Dr. Truett to speak three, four, or even five times a day. During his service overseas in the World War, six addresses a day constituted his usual schedule, besides countless conferences with individuals in between the addresses; and all of it under the poor physical conditions of the war areas. Not once did that fine physical instrument—his voice—fail him.

Dr. Truett's powers of physical endurance are almost unbelievable. Of course he tires. But he gets more done even when he is tired than most men can do when they are in full vigor. His endurance is a source of wonder to all his intimates.

Dr. Truett's mental processes are characterized by six words—vigorous, direct, acquisitive, retentive, logical, positive.

All of his mental processes are *vigorous*. This is manifested in his conversation, reading and speaking. If he is ever afflicted with mental lassitude, he successfully conceals it. There is no flabbiness to his mind, and hence none to his words or his sermons. They are robust and red-blooded in their effect, and always stimulating.

George Truett drives straight to the heart of a subject. He does not loiter along the way, nor turn aside into by-paths simply because they look inviting. He is *direct* in all the processes of seeking truth and proclaiming that truth when found. In an interview, especially when he is the questioner, he cuts his way direct to the core of the matter. Unerringly his fingers find their way to the spiritual pulse which discloses the state of a man's heart.

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This directness of his mental processes explains in part why he almost invariably begins his sermons with a quick exegesis of the text or the scripture passage before him. By this exegesis, he lays the foundation for whatever else may follow. And thus it is that his preaching always leaves the impression that it is founded on and fortified by the Word of God.

The majority of people appreciate directness and simplicity of statement. And they much prefer statements which formulate and relate for them truths which they have known or sensed all along, rather than statements which call forth the exclamation: "Well, I never thought of that before!" George Truett carries his audiences with him because he travels in a straight line from points within the knowledge and experience of his auditors; and because he leads them by gentle grades to higher things.

His mind is both *inquisitive* and *acquisitive*. He is curious to know and disposed to make his own that which he discovers to be worth knowing. For these reasons, he reads very widely, with a quick eye for that which will be grist for his mill; he probes people with searching questions concerning what they know; he listens with deep interest to any speaker who has a real message. His mind has an affinity for facts as a sponge has an affinity for water. And as the sponge, under pressure, gives up water, so he, under the constant pressure of ministering to the minds and souls of men, is always giving forth what he has acquired.

Dr. Truett has the most *retentive* memory this writer has ever observed. He has an amazing verbal memory,

especially for scripture, poetry, and the pungent sayings of famous people. His ability to quote from memory, with absolute accuracy, extended passages, poems and sayings is a constant surprise to his friends. Often, in the course of extemporaneous speaking, he will bring forth from the files of his remarkable memory accurate quotations of considerable length which he may not have used for many years.

His memory for faces and names is uncanny. He is rarely at a loss for the name that goes with a given face. He may not have seen the person for twenty-five years, but if he ever knew that person at all well in the past, he rarely fails to recall his name promptly. Innumerable examples of his memory could be cited which would utterly tax the credulity of those not familiar with this phase of his mentality.

Dr. Truett has a *logical mind*. It insists upon proceeding from a sound premise to a natural conclusion. To his listeners or his readers this is one of his most pleasing and satisfying characteristics. With him it is: "First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." His method of reasoning is predominantly deductive. His major premise is the fact of God and His love for a lost world; his minor premise is that unforgiven sin dooms to eternal separation from God; his conclusion is ever that there is hope for all who trust in Christ as Saviour and Lord. This forms the framework for his ministry of reconciliation.

The mental processes of George Truett are *positive* rather than negative. The affirmations of the gospel have a much stronger appeal to him than the negations

and prohibitions of the law. The positive form of the Golden Rule, as expressed by Jesus, would seem to him infinitely preferable to its negative form, as expressed by Confucius.

This positive type of mind largely determines the general character of his sermons which are a happy blend of the didactic and hortatory. The didactic element in his preaching frequently borders on the dogmatic, in the sense that he "speaks as one having authority." He never preaches his doubts, but always proclaims what he believes to be the truth. One writer in a fine character study of Dr. Truett calls him "The Devout Dogmatist." He is dogmatic in the same sense that the ancient prophets were dogmatic, as they came forth announcing with terrible earnestness their "Thus saith the Lord!"

In his judgment, the pulpit is no place for a religious stammerer. He thinks that the preacher should be able to say truthfully, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." It is conviction that convinces. The trumpet must give forth no uncertain sound, otherwise who will prepare himself for the battle? George Truett seems to live under the terrific imperative which was upon Peter and John as they said to the Sanhedrin: "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Bishop Ralph S. Cushman of Denver, was thinking of Dr. Truett's mental qualities when he wrote the author as follows.

To me he [Dr. Truett] is a frequent reminder of Saint Paul's word, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a *sound mind*." No one doubts his loyalty to his own denomination but he is a good illustration of how a real Christian is too large for any one of our Communion.

Whenever I think of George Truett I thank God and take courage.

George Truett came of a stock of people who had a high sense of moral values. Sound moral consciousness was born and bred in him. This native trend was acutely sensitized by his experience of conversion. From the day of his conversion, his record of moral rectitude will bear close scrutiny. Untold multitudes of people confidently believe that under no circumstances would he consciously do wrong, or injure in any way any living human being. And they have good foundation for such beliefs.

This confidence has naturally tended to call forth in him actions and attitudes of the highest, moral standard. But more than anything else, his constant Bible study has developed his moral consciousness; for, to him, the Bible is the divinely inspired and authoritative Word of God—"a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path."

George Truett's moral quality has been tested and proved in every conceivable manner and he has maintained his integrity throughout. At times, some men have tried to deride his integrity, but their aspersions have always recoiled upon their own heads. One ex-

planation of his power as a preacher is that people believe in his absolute honesty.

Every preacher needs spiritual understanding. George Truett has it. He has spiritual understanding of the *Word of God*. That is manifest in every sermon he preaches.

Likewise he has spiritual understanding of the *Person and of the Mission of Christ*. These are among his major themes. Because of this understanding, he is able to make Christ seem so real, so wonderful, so glorious, so to be desired, that men who leave his services do not exclaim, "What a great sermon!" nor "What a great preacher!" but they exclaim: "What a great Saviour we have!"

He has a rare understanding of *the human heart* and its moral and spiritual reactions. Therefore he is able to reach and probe and stir needy, sinful, suffering, and bewildered humanity as few men of his own or any other generation have been able to do.

The shortest road to the will is via the heart, and because George Truett is gifted with the power of access to human hearts, he is particularly skilful in capturing the wills of men for Christ. He who would keep men enlisted and efficient in spiritual undertakings must keep them supplied with *spiritual food*. Herein, George Truett, the preacher, makes an excellent steward. He knows what is good for hungry souls and he has much joy in feeding them. He must likewise keep them engaged in healthful spiritual exercises. George Truett is an adept at this also. He is an expert at finding Christian tasks for Christians to perform.

The public has long evinced a lively interest in George Truett's *sermonic methods*. Therefore, we discuss his preparation and his delivery of sermons.

This does not contemplate his preparation of sermons for publication, but for proclamation. As a matter of fact, he has done very little of the former. Rarely ever does he write sermons out in full manuscript. Only sixty-one of his sermons have been printed in book form, and but a few of them in tract form, such as his sermon on "The Lord's Supper." Practically all of these were taken down stenographically as he delivered them. After he had hurriedly gone over the reporter's typed manuscripts, these sermons were compiled and published in three volumes—*We Would See Jesus*, *A Quest for Souls*, and *God's Call to America*, edited by J. B. Cranfill, and in one volume (*Follow Thou Me*) by P. W. James and I. J. Van Ness.

He is never without a vest-pocket notebook in which he is constantly jotting down texts, seed-thoughts for sermons, notes which may become sermon outlines some day. Especially is this little notebook in evidence as he reads. Book margins are also favorite places for him to make notations which later may appear in sermons. But the majority of his notes are made and kept in his mind. During his first pastorate while a student in Baylor, he wrote a friend: "When I see the varied temperaments and relative needs of my church members, sermons come to me like birds in flocks." This comment of the early days is true of all his pastoral days.

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His topics and texts are selected with definite ends in view—not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the needs of the people who will probably be in his audiences. His topics are never sensational nor enigmatic, and rarely are they announced beforehand in the press, church bulletins, or elsewhere. He always keeps to the great central themes of God's Word. Hear him on this subject of topics: ²

Misplaced emphasis explains the pitiful defeat of preachers again and again. Sometimes one's heart is pierced with grave concern for the pulpit, as he reads the printed list of subjects to be discussed from the pulpit. It is easy for a preacher to catch the cheap cheer, but such behavior presages a cheap man. The itch for notoriety is indeed a deadly microbe. We do not go forth on our God-appointed mission as preachers to be ranters and lambasters and snickering caterers, with an endless succession of grotesque, spectacular, bizarre, barn-storming methods; but we are to go as true prophets of God, as faithful, compassionate shepherds of souls, hiding ourselves ever behind the cross of Christ. Thus does Paul put it: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Both our message and our method as preachers are to be such that the sinning, needy people to whom we preach, shall see Jesus only.

Circumstances often require Dr. Truett to begin the actual preparation of his sermons perilously near to the time when they are to be delivered. True, he may have

² From *Follow Thou Me*, page 237. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

been thinking of that forthcoming sermon for days, weeks, or even years. But, as a rule, Sunday morning's sermon, whether new or old, is reduced to notes the Saturday afternoon or night preceding. By no means would he recommend this procedure to others, however.

He often makes his sermon notes on the back of envelopes with pen and ink in a Truett system of abbreviations and hieroglyphics which only he can decipher. Having made these notes, he ponders them at every opportunity until he stands up to preach, but he rarely ever glances at them during delivery of the sermon. He does not like to be handicapped with crutches while running a race. He trusts his memory and it seldom betrays him. He prefers to stumble a bit, if need be, with repetitious and inverted sentences, rather than to fall back upon his written notations.

He studies and reworks an old sermon as assiduously as though it were a sermon being prepared for the first time: for he realizes, as most preachers do, that hot fires must be kindled if the old broth is to be savory. He does not hesitate to repeat a sermon whenever he feels led of the Spirit to do so, for he has long since learned that "line upon line and precept upon precept" is a good principle pedagogically and spiritually. As a matter of fact, people enjoy and are stirred by a sermon of his, the second or third time they hear it, as much as when they heard it for the first time. That is to be explained by the same principle which explains why people, season after season, flocked to hear an Edwin Booth play *Hamlet*, or a Caruso sing the lead-

ing rôle of an opera they had heard many times before. It is no reflection upon the artist or the audience which is thrilled every time they hear the "Caprice" come from Fritz Kreisler's violin. Art, at its best, does not grow stale, and neither does the gospel of Christ as preached by George Truett.

His outlines on envelopes accumulate in great number around his home study—suit cases and boxes are filled with them. Occasionally, there must be a sermon-outline house-cleaning. For many years, Mrs. Truett put them in tow-sacks and stored them in the attic. "Aunt May" Meeks, a long-time friend and inmate, placed tags on several of those sacks in the attic long ago which read: "Jessie's dowry in case she marries a preacher." Even though Jessie did marry a preacher those tagged sacks still remain in the attic, for there is no Rosetta Stone to decipher them.

Dr. Truett's sermon outlines are always very simple and natural. Take, for example, the outline of his sermon on "The Parable of the Potter":³

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. (Jeremiah 18:4.)

Introduction: Jeremiah visits the potter's house and there learns lessons valuable for us today.

- I. God has a plan for every life, even as the potter had for the vessel.
- II. God's plan for us may be marred by us, even as the vessel was marred in the potter's hands.

³ *Follow Thou Me*, page 127 ff. Reprinted by permission.

III. The marred life can be made over again, even as the potter reshaped the marred vessel.

This is typical of his homiletical methods.

Another case in point would be his treatment of Acts 13:26.⁴

I. David served—Service the test of greatness.

II. His own generation—the true sphere for service.

III. By the will of God—the only adequate motive.

A more elaborate outline of his would be the following:

*Our Adequate and Abiding Gospel*⁵

Text: *Romans 1:16*, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Introduction—The shaken and disorganized condition of the modern world causes many to inquire if there be any adequate remedy for the world situation as it is today. The answer is an unequivocal "yes"; and Paul expresses it for us in the words of our text. He had found it adequate in other lands and desired to try it out in Rome also. Was Paul justified in his estimate of the gospel of Christ?

I. *Paul was not ashamed of the Author of the Gospel.*

1. Paul's conception of the *Person* of Christ.

2. Look at Christ's *words*—any of them.

3. Examine his *works*.

4. Look at his *character*.

II. *Paul was not ashamed of Christ's Gospel*,—"the power of God unto salvation."

1. Many false and inadequate gospels.

⁴ See *Follow Thou Me*, page 115 ff. Reprinted by permission.

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 51 ff.

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2. There is no need for a "new gospel." The need is to try the one we have in Christ.
3. It gets spiritual results wherever tried.
4. The challenge was never greater than now to proclaim and live it to the ends of the earth.
5. *The gospel of Christ is the one adequate remedy for every need and condition of mankind.*

III. *The crowning glory of Christ's gospel is that it may be fully tested and proved in the crucible of experience.*

1. Experience is the final test of any system. What fruitage does it produce?
2. Christ in human experience is the crowning glory of his gospel. He does save and empower and glorify. He welcomes being tested.
3. Christ's gospel abides because it is adequate unto salvation.

IV. *What are your personal relations to the Author of this adequate and abiding gospel?*

Are you his friends? Do you seek above all else to do his bidding? Surely you are not ashamed of Christ or his gospel. Let him have his way with you.

Dr. Truett's great familiarity with his extensive library makes it possible for him to command its treasures readily, as he prepares his sermons. He knows exactly where to find what he wants.

Some years ago, during Dr. Truett's extended absence in foreign lands, Mrs. Truett conceived the idea of bringing order out of what she thought was library chaos; and so, she had a trained librarian come and catalogue and rearrange all his books according to the most

approved library science. She imagined it would be a happy surprise for him. Alas! Upon his return, the good man was miserable and utterly at sea among his beloved books. As quickly as possible, he rearranged them according to his own system, which is no system at all, except as it may exist in his own mind. For twenty years now he has been quite at home in his private chaos of books and he wants to continue to enjoy them in his own way.

He is an adept at making his library yield up its choicest morsels for the mental, moral and spiritual sustenance of his audiences.

The greatest hours of George Truett's life occur when he comes to the delivery of his sermons. It is when he comes down from the mount of meditation and prayer, face all aglow from communion with God, that Truett, the man, is transfigured into Truett, the messenger of God, upon whom rests a mighty burden and passion to declare His whole counsel.

The lines which F. W. D. Meyer puts into the mouth of Paul, the preacher, are appropriate here.

*Oft when the Word is on me to deliver,
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare,
Desert or throng, the city or the river
Melts in a lucid paradise of air.*

*'Only like souls I see the folk thereunder
Bound who should conquer, slaves who
should be kings;
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things.*

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*Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers through me like a trumpet call.
Oh, to save these, to perish for their
saving,
Die for their life, He offered for them all.*⁶

As the time draws near for him to preach, he is as restless as a thoroughbred just before the race. Nervously, he paces back and forth across his study. He welcomes no interruptions at that time. He knows that, in all probability, he will soon be speaking to people who desperately need spiritual light on life's problems. He must not fail them. He must make clear to them the way of peace and victory and life eternal. He must help them to see "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

Quickly, modestly, unobtrusively, he enters the pulpit. At the first opportunity, his searching eyes scan the audience, studying the faces of the people. He is looking for this one and that one whom he hopes will be there—in all likelihood, people for whom he has prayed as he prepared his message for that hour.

Scripture reading, songs, prayers, announcements and offerings having been engaged in, all with deeply reverent and worshipful spirit, the time for the sermon is at hand.

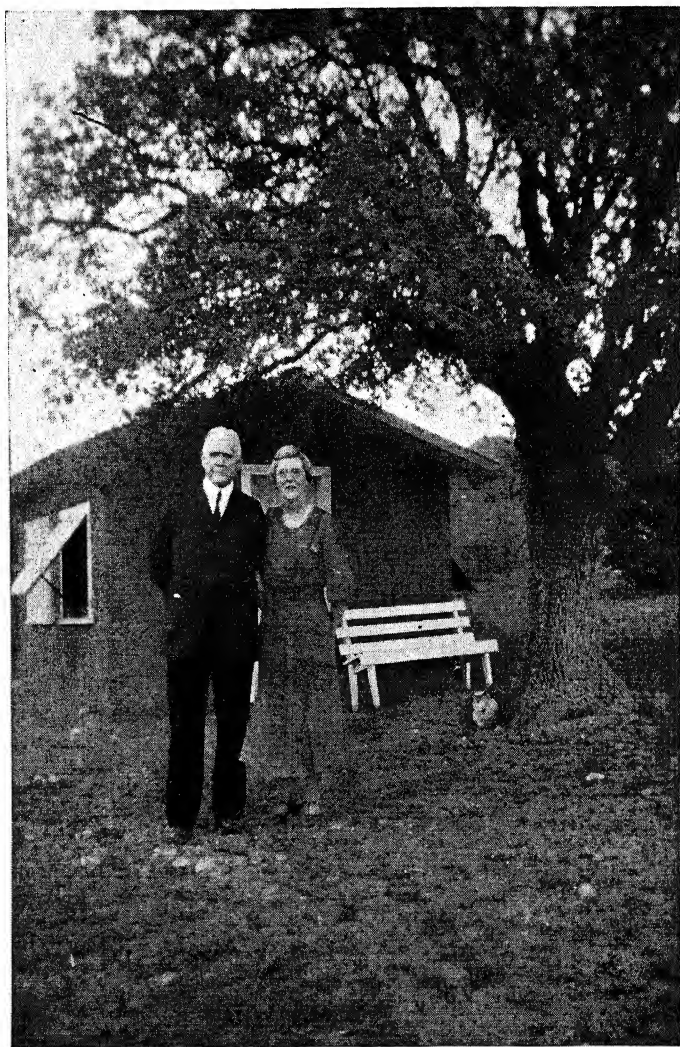
The text is read, or quoted, and perhaps the topic is stated. For some moments a small Bible is held in Dr. Truett's hand as he gives a rapid and easy exegesis of

⁶ Quoted by John E. White in *Character Sketch of George W. Truett*. See *We Would See Jesus*, page 22. Reprinted by permission.



Calvert Bros., Nashville.

Mrs. George Truett



© Fox Company, San Antonio.

Dr. and Mrs. Truett in front of their shack at the Paisano Baptist encampment in August, 1935

the text and its context. He takes whatever time is necessary to make certain that his audience has grasped the essential message of that portion of the scripture on which he proposes to base his message. That may take only a few moments or it may require a quarter of an hour. He seems to proceed on the theory that his own message will be of little value unless he can first put across to his audience a definite message from the Word of God. It is just at this point that the man's spiritual understanding of the Bible is most manifest. It is difficult for a person to go away from one of his preaching services without a feeling of having laid hold upon the meaning of a portion of God's Word.

During all these earlier moments of his sermon, Dr. Truett has been speaking in a clear, conversational tone of voice. There is something restful and quieting about it. All the while, he is establishing sympathetic relations with his auditors. Lest some be slow to grasp the basic truths, or be in an unresponsive frame of mind toward any religious truths, he is apt to repeat his statement of them. It is surprising how many different ways he can state the same idea. Apparently, he senses the presence of some recalcitrant minds and is unwilling to pass on without them. It is like the good teacher restating and reworking the problem until everyone in the class understands it. Those who, themselves, are accustomed to public speaking quickly sense what he is doing. He is seeking to gain entrance to every mind there. He must get them to *think* with him if he hopes to have them *feel* with him and *make such choices* as he may urge upon them.

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It has always been a fascinating thing to watch the blacksmith at his forge place the cold and unyielding iron in the bed of live coals, and patiently pump the air beneath it until it comes to white heat. Then he quickly places it on the anvil and, with ringing blows of hammer, shapes it to his purpose. It is somewhat like that when George Truett preaches.

Consciously, or unconsciously, he practices the ancient rule for public speech: "Begin low, go slow, rise higher, and take fire." There is a decided cadence to his delivery, with sufficient variation to relieve it of monotony. It is easy and pleasant to listen to him and therefore it comes as a great surprise to people to discover that he has spoken perhaps twice as long as it had seemed to them. That is true whether he speaks twenty-five minutes, or a full hour.

Dr. Truett's sermons are better to listen to than to read and that is because of the charm of his delivery. And for that same reason the printed word can never take the place of the spoken word; and "the press can never usurp the function of the pulpit." The rain-drops take the rays of the sun and fashion them into an arch of glory across the sky. Personality does the same thing with the words of truth.

When Dr. Truett senses that his audience is with him in thought, he will perhaps illustrate some truth just uttered by relating a homely incident in his inimitable way—probably an incident which has come under his own observation. Thus does he touch the emotions, for a moment, before he proceeds with further arguments, reinforcing scriptures, and pungent

quotations. All the while, he is climbing higher with increasing tempo. Then, lest some be left behind, he, once again, "takes up the harp of life and smites on all the chords with might." A thousand handkerchiefs—white flags of approaching surrender—make their appearance to wipe away tears from the eyes of those who are unashamed thus to be moved.

By this time, the indicative mood changes to the imperative; the stream becomes a rushing torrent; the small blaze a conflagration; the gentle breeze a tornado. Words come like bullets from a machine gun. Sentences smash upon the audience like bursting bombs. Truths which brook no argument flash forth and are accepted without question. The attack is terrific.

Powerful assaults having been made on minds and hearts, the attack is now centered on the wills of his auditors. The preacher pleads for right choices to be made. He calls for surrender to the will of Christ. He warns against delay. He gives assurance of divine help and guidance. He exhorts all to cast themselves anew on the tender mercies of God and, with tender compassion, he invites the unsaved to accept and confess the Saviour then and there, without a moment's delay.

Opposition gives way. There is glad freedom in surrender. The speaker has fought and won in the name of the King, whose gracious terms of pardon and peace are boldly announced by the preacher. He has simply stood there as a kind of medium, attracting attention, not to himself, but to his Master. He has been quite content to serve, if only Christ might master. He leaves the impression that the victory, every spiritual victory,

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rightly belongs only to the crowned One who goes forth conquering, and to conquer. Every element of his dominant personality has been joyfully surrendered to the Saviour-King. The audience feels this; and there is a contagion which inclines them to yield themselves without reserve. Christians rejoice in the Saviour and repentant sinners confess him before the world.

After all is said and done, the people flock to hear him preach because he preaches Christ crucified, the all-sufficient Saviour and the only rightful Lord and Master of the souls of men. His is a Christ-centered ministry.

In a certain church, there is a very beautiful panel representing the Christ. This must be lighted from behind in order to be seen at its best. The old sexton takes delight in conducting visitors through the church. When they are grouped in front of this panel, he turns on the lights for them to see the illumined and glorified figure of the Christ, while he is careful to remain in the shadows. That is what George Truett is ever doing as he preaches—creating light so that people see Jesus only.

Evaluations (concluded)

WHEN OFFERED the presidency of his Alma Mater, Baylor University, in the early years of his ministry, George Truett declined it with the simple explanation: "I have sought and found the shepherd's heart." This statement of his turned out to be a true commentary on his whole ministry. He has never lost "the shepherd's heart." It explains much of his success as a preacher. He has never lost touch with the people. He speaks their language, he knows their problems. He is touched with a feeling of their infirmities and is ever moved with compassion for them.

He is pastor of a church of over seven thousand members. Since first he became a preacher, it is probable that he has been the actual pastor of at least twenty-five thousand people. They have never been just a congregation to him. They are so many *individuals* to him, each with his own temperament, his own problems, his own special needs. His ability to individualize his church members and his audience is one explanation of his power over them. And he has the happy gift of visualizing the potentialities of the individual and picturing in his mind what a given person may become under the transforming touch of Christ. That gives definiteness and direction to his pastoral ministrations.

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This individualization is not confined to his pastoral work. It is carried over into his pulpit work. It would be surprising were it known how many of his sermons, or parts of them, are designed to meet the special needs of some individual in the congregation. But he knows that if he can meet the known needs of one he in all likelihood will meet the unknown needs of many others.

The hunter who comes home with his bag full of quail is not the one who shoots at the whole covey, but the one who "single-shots" them. Aiming to get one certain bird, he may get several others with the same load of shot. The man of the parable¹ left the ninety and nine and went after the one sheep that was lost, until he found it. This shepherdly care, even for one, must have given a sense of greater security to the ninety and nine. A pastor's flock, be it small or large, is comforted and fortified when it observes that he does not lose sight of the individual.

No pastor on earth can keep up with seven thousand members, nor with four thousand, nor with two thousand. As a matter of fact, when a church goes beyond one thousand in membership, pastoral assistance is usually needed. Dr. Truett has been most fortunate in having, for many years, assistants of rare tact, skill and faithfulness. Bob Coleman, lay-assistant, and Adolphus Johnson, church secretary, have for a full generation given cooperation and help to Dr. Truett beyond all words to express. Their labors have been supplemented by a half dozen other full-time workers, and by many

¹ Luke 15:3-7.

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volunteers. Dr. Truett has imbued them all with his shepherdly interest in people, so that, with remarkable fidelity and spiritual insight, they minister to the temporal and spiritual needs of the membership and to a vast constituency beyond. This they do during his frequent absences and also when he is in the city, unless the problem be such that he alone can handle it. His church has ever been disposed to furnish him all needed assistance.

But in spite of all this, his pastoral hand is always on the situation. Though far away, he keeps in vital touch by letter, telegram, telephone, or cable. Seldom does a Sunday pass during his absence that a telegram or a cablegram from him, of pastoral solicitude for the church, is not read to the congregations of that day. In unbelievable numbers, letters written by his own hand, or telephone or wired messages of loving sympathy for those in sorrow, or happy felicitations for those who rejoice, are promptly sent out, no matter where he may be or what he may be doing. These are more than perfunctory, pastoral gestures. They are the genuine expression of a heart that cares, hand-clasps of a friend from across the miles. These overtures of loving interest are not confined to his church family, nor to the citizenry of his beloved Dallas and Texas; they are sent all over the world, wherever he knows his friends to be in suffering and sorrow, or in the flush of notable victories or special joys.

George Truett has almost a genius for discovering and remembering people who would welcome a friendly message from him. His files are packed with

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thousands of letters from all over the world, written in response to some communication from him, or else prompted by gratitude for him and his reported ministries. Take, for example, the following letter from Dr. F. B. Meyer, of London:

Dr. G. W. Truett,
Dallas, Texas.

My dear friend:

What a lovely letter you have written, with your own hand. I am deeply touched by it. The only thing to do is for us to make a tryst to meet, as soon as possible—if not before—on our arriving in Heaven, at the Middle Gate on the East Side of the New Jerusalem. Then we will go off together, for a ramble by the River of Water of Life, and will doubtless find a nook, where we can have a quiet talk and perhaps the Prince Himself will join us. There will be much to talk about. . . .

Yours affectionately,

Sept. 6, 1928.

F. B. MEYER.

Dr. W. W. Landrum of Kentucky was often heard to say: "A Christian should have a heart twenty-five thousand miles in circumference." Judged by this specification, Dr. Truett certainly qualifies as a Christian; for, on every continent, and in almost every nation, are those whom he counts as his friends. For example, the mailing list of those to whom his Christmas Message goes frequently runs as high as fifteen thousand; and that list belts the globe.

At no time is the shepherd's heart more in evidence than when Dr. Truett offers the pastoral prayer at the

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Sunday morning service in his own church. At its conclusion, the writer has more than once said to himself: "Why not pronounce the benediction now? Surely these people cannot be lifted any nearer the throne by anything that is to follow."

The day is never too hot, nor the night too dark or stormy, for him to go cheerfully to any one of his members or to any friend who may really need him.

Dr. Truett is not only the pastor of the church but also of every organization within the church. This is well understood by all the members of his church and all the members of every organization. One secret of this pastor's power with his church is the fact that he identifies himself with his people in all that makes for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

Dr. Truett is a gracious pastor and wise counsellor to other preachers. There are always a goodly number of them who are members of his church. But a host of other pastors and preachers, especially young ones, come to him for help with their problems. Mrs. Truett, who, better than any person in the world, knows him and understands him, recently said:

Mr. Truett's deep and abiding interest in all young preachers and in their real call to the ministry is one of the outstanding characteristics of his life. Regardless of denomination they come to him for advice and inspiration, and he is never too busy nor too tired to listen with painstaking care to their problems and uncertainties. They go away encouraged and revitalized for the great work to which they are called, and reassured as to its divine nature.

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During all the years, his fellow-pastors of Dallas, of all denominations, both white and colored, have claimed his friendship and found him to be a true friend, free of envy and pride. He has a friendly feeling for every true minister of the gospel, regardless of his color or the cut of his collar. This has been demonstrated times without number.

His shepherdly instincts are all-inclusive. Any man in the world is welcome within the bounds of his friendship. And that is because he seeks to follow in the steps of Him who is able to save unto the uttermost because He loves without limit.

Dr. Truett's service relationships with his own denomination are essentially pastoral, rather than official or ecclesiastical in their nature. It is true that he has been an official (president) of both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist World Alliance and has helped to shape the larger policies of both these religious bodies. But he has done so by the gentle and sane persuasions of a wise pastor rather than by the pronouncements of a powerful official or of an ecclesiastical dictator. Such procedure would be utterly foreign to George Truett.

When his fellow Baptists have called him to a place of leadership he has not sought to side-step the responsibilities which go with the position. Instead, he has endeavored to magnify the office by bringing to it the best he had in the way of faith and works, wisdom and grace, vision and consecration. When he laid down the gavel of the Southern Baptist Convention he was more thoroughly enshrined in the confidence and affection

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of his people of the South than ever before, because he had led them as a good shepherd might lead his flock into green pastures and beside still waters. And when they were passing through a valley of dark shadows, he calmed their fears as he reminded them of the unfailing promises of God.

It was *Pastor* Truett who presided over the Convention for three testing years, and it is *Pastor* Truett who now presides over the Baptist World Alliance. John Wesley envisioned the whole world as his parish. To an extent never made possible to John Wesley, George Truett has in his own life-time felt the personal tug of a world parish, as he has made pastoral visits all over the United States and Canada, over much of South America, in nearly every country in Europe, the British Isles, Egypt, Palestine, India, Burma, China, Japan and the isles of the sea.

From sixty nations, Baptists will come to the World Alliance in Atlanta in the summer of 1939. And if the life and health of the man who presided over that body at Toronto, in 1928, and at Berlin, in 1934, be preserved so that he can preside in Atlanta, these representatives of twelve million Baptists will once more sense the heart beat of one who loves and would help them all because they are sheep belonging to the Lord of all the flocks.

Such, and more, much more, is George Truett, the pastor.

The Old Testament phrase, "Man of God," so rich in meaning to the ancients, has often been applied to George W. Truett. One comes across it many times

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in the writings of those who have sought to account for this man and his ministry. When all the other keys, which were supposed to unlock the secrets of his power, had been tried and laid aside, writers and speakers invariably have fallen back on this term, "Man of God," as the only phrase adequate to account for George Truett. In so doing they have sensed the truth.

A MAN OF GOD¹

George Liddell

*Give me a man of God—one man
Whose faith is master of his mind,
And I will right ten thousand wrongs
And bless the name of all mankind.*

*Give me a man of God—one man
Whose tongue is touched with heaven's fire,
And I will flame the darkest hearts
With high resolve and clean desire.*

*Give me a man of God—one man
One mighty prophet of the Lord,
And I will give you peace on earth
Bought with a prayer and not a sword.*

*Give me a man of God—one man
True to the vision that he sees,
And I will build your broken shrines
And bring the nations to their knees.*

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As used in the Old Testament, the term, at its best, implied several things about the "Man of God." It implied that he was a man of faith, of prayer, of courage, of spiritual insight, and of authority from above to proclaim "Thus saith the Lord." Add to these the gospel implications, and the Christian "Man of God" becomes an ambassador for Christ, definitely called to personal consecration and positively commissioned to the public proclamation of God's ultimate truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

George Truett is a man of *faith*—faith in God, faith in man, faith in the atoning death and triumphant resurrection of Christ, faith in the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, faith in the ultimate triumph of the good, faith to believe that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. He, like every other victorious Christian, has overcome only as he has been possessed of that faith which makes possible the victory that overcomes the world.

He is also a man of *prayer*. He well knows that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." His prayers rise day and night for those whom he would bind to God.

Reference has been made to his revealing pulpit prayers. They *are* revealing. They show that he knows the way to the throne; that he knows the promises of God and how to plead them; that he knows the needs of weak and troubled humanity; that his private prayer-life is constant and utterly sincere, otherwise he could not deliver those pastoral prayers which, for the

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time being, seem to mark the union of the minds of men with the mind of Christ. Because it entirely loses sight of self in remembering the needs of others, intercessory prayer can come only from one possessed of the vicarious spirit. The intercessory element is ever prominent in the prayers of George Truett; and therefore we must conclude that this element is always present in his private prayers.

People all over the world believe in the value of George Truett's intercession; else they would not, in such large numbers, write or wire him requesting him to pray for them or their loved ones.

Some years ago, a prominent and elderly criminal lawyer of Dallas, noted for his lack of faith, met Dr. Truett on the street and rather wistfully said:

"Dr. Truett, I was at your church Sunday and heard what you said about prayer. I don't suppose you ever pray for a sinner like me."

Dr. Truett replied: "Indeed I do. I have prayed for you, by name, daily, for years. My friend, you are on my prayer-list, and have been for years."

As Dr. Truett said this, he drew a note-book from his pocket and showed the gray-haired lawyer his name listed among those for whom he prayed daily. The preacher saw the trembling lips and moistened eyes as the old lawyer turned away and with a half sob said: "Thank you, Doctor, thank you for remembering a hardened old sinner!"

George T. Wood of New Brighton, New York,

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who has written a most discriminating *Analytical Study* of Dr. Truett, relates the following:²

While I was walking along the streets of Dallas with Dr. Truett he received the following telegram:

"Dr. George W. Truett
First Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas

Your telegram a great comfort to us. Our boy still dangerously ill. Influenza with meningitis complications. Continue your prayers for his recovery. The thought that you are praying for him gives us comfort."

The sender of this telegram was a layman not of the same denomination as Dr. Truett, and lived in a distant, Southern state. The attitude of this prominent layman is by no means uncommon in the South. Dr. Truett is known as a man whose prayers are heard and answered.

George Truett has *courage*—the courage of deep convictions, high ethical consciousness and unfaltering certitude that he has been called and commissioned by God as an ambassador for Christ. Therefore he lives and he speaks as one having that emphasis of authority which inherently belongs to the Man of God. The subjunctive mood has but little place in his program of life. Such words as "perhaps," "if," "provided that," "perchance," "unless," are seldom given asylum in his theological vocabulary. His is a positive gospel and an affirmative life.

No one ever hears him apologizing for Christ or His

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gospel, or soft-pedaling the demands thereof. Hear him courageously speak on the surrendered life of the minister of the gospel:

Think of a preacher being a moral coward! We are to be willing to pay the price for spiritual power. It is a great price. We must be crucified with Christ. We must die to self. We must live unto the Lord without evasion or reservation, if we are to be the witnesses, the prophets, the advocates of the Gospel of Christ that we ought to be. Jesus looked upon ill-fated Jerusalem, and wept over it and then went out and died for it. That is the road we must travel. We must faithfully see our cities, our communities, our world, and weep over them, and then lay our lives on the altar for their deliverance and their redemption. What manner of men preachers should be! Good men. Not goody good men. Good men. God's men, impassioned and empowered by the living Spirit. What manner of men we ought to be!

The Man of God must have *insight to things spiritual*. He must be able to see the mountain filled with the horses and chariots of fire; he must be able to interpret that which is written by the finger of God upon the walls of conscience; he must be able to translate the signs of the times into terms of their spiritual meaning; he must be able to hear and tell of the foot-falls of the Almighty as He walks in His garden at eventide; he must be able to draw aside, now and then, the curtain of things material and let mortals glimpse the spiritual glories which crown the Mercy-seat of God. Indeed, the Man of God must be an alchemist who changes the base metals of this world into the fine

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gold of heavenly values. The Man of God must declare the pattern that was given unto him in the Mount; he must utter the vision granted unto him upon his isle of revelation; he must roll away the stone from before the tomb of this world's dead hopes and proclaim the resurrection of a new life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

None of these things can he do without spiritual insight.

George Truett is truly a man of spiritual insight. His whole ministry has been keyed to the pitch of spiritual emphasis. Sermons, prayers, speeches, pastoral ministries—all his activities—have been distinguished by a spiritual emphasis. There is wisdom in the old saying: "Let the cobbler stick to his last," and even worldly men sense that a Man of God should emphasize things spiritual. Because George Truett has done this wisely and well ever since he was called to preach, forty-nine years ago, he has been privileged, under God, to recruit for Christ untold thousands.

On the occasion of Dr. Truett's thirty-fifth anniversary at Dallas, Fred F. Brown, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, and President of the Southern Baptist Convention at that time, wrote as follows:

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

A few days ago Brother Robert H. Coleman extended to me the privilege of using some space in the First Baptist *Reminder* to express my unbounded appreciation of your noble pastor as you come to celebrate the 35th anniversary of his ministry with your great church. From

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the time that I have known that I had the opportunity to write a word that you would read on this highly significant day, an old Bible expression has been running through my mind—"Man of God." And as this scriptural phrase has repeatedly come to my thought I have turned the pages of my Bible again and have noted how many, many times the words recur—Man of God. Over and over again the Holy Spirit writes this expression beneath the life and ministry of some great figure whom God has called to stand for Him. And as my thought crosses the intervening miles and in imagination I worship with your church family on this high day, I find myself repeating the phrase—Man of God.

As I think of the large place that Dr. Truett has occupied in Kingdom affairs for more than a quarter of a century, I find the explanation of his constructive and fruitful leadership in this scriptural expression—Man of God.

As I thank God for your pastor's unsurpassed pulpit power and try to analyze it, the usual explanations come to mind—orator with unusual physique, marvelous voice and delivery; mind richly furnished and continuously growing; heart power that touches and moves like a resistless tide of spiritual fervor, etc. But none of these satisfy as an explanation of Dr. Truett in the pulpit, and I find myself repeating: Man of God—Man of God.

In a peculiar way he belongs to your church family. He belongs, too, to the city of Dallas, the state of Texas, and the South. But I know that you agree with me when I insist that his vision, his sympathies, his services, his interests, and his messages are world-encompassing. This man of God who has stood in your pulpit through 35 years of joyous ministry stands now in the meridian of

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his powers on a world pulpit, proclaiming the message of the Savior of the world.

Let me say another word. Your pastor has shaped and moulded the ideals of more preachers of this generation than any other living man. There are literally thousands of us who have looked to him as our ideal. The years have come and gone and today he looms before us, great white flaming soul, calling us to the deeper things in the spiritual life and the larger things in Kingdom service. We answer back, "We thank God for you, your friendship has been a rich benediction in our lives. The fraternal relations with which you have touched us have been a source of wholesome urgency. Your modest, unassuming, self-effacing attitude has rebuked our clamoring selfishness. Your unswerving loyalty to Christ and the things of Christ have been an unfailing source of inspiration to us."

Today our hearts go out in unbounded devotion to this man of God under whose ministry you are permitted to live and love and serve. I know, too, that with unfeigned devotion you think of the one who has walked by his side through the years. Heaven's richest blessings on Mrs. Truett!

Dr. Brown's tribute to Mrs. Truett was quite as much in order as the things he wrote about Dr. Truett. He knew, as all who are conversant with Dr. Truett's ideal domestic life know, that it is impossible to account for Dr. Truett without taking account of Mrs. Truett.

A Christian's behaviour in his own home and toward his own family is a true index of his Christianity. A preacher, for example, may be ever so saintly in the

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pulpit or out before the world, but if he is tyrannical and impatient in his own home then, indeed, he denies the faith and utterly discredits his public professions of piety. Nowhere does Dr. Truett show up to better advantage than in his home. His sympathetic understanding, unfailing patience, abounding generosity, tender solicitude and thoughtful care are ever in evidence. He never forgets birthdays, anniversaries, and important occasions in the lives of his wife, children or grandchildren. His forethought and excessive generosity on all such occasions have produced many quickened heart-beats, joyous exclamations, and deep emotions upon the part of his loved ones. He may be on the other side of the world at Christmas time, or when a birthday comes for one of the family, but invariably some token of his love will arrive. And when travelling with any member of his family he insists on providing every possible comfort and convenience.

God's man must be a *consecrated man*. He must be able to say with Paul, "This one thing I do," and "For me to live is Christ." George Truett can so say. His entire being, conscious and sub-conscious, is permeated and impassioned by the holy purpose to give Christ full sway in his own life as he seeks to make Him known to all men everywhere, by all means at his command.

If the reader wishes to know the innermost secret of this man's consecration to Christ Jesus and his gospel, let him go back to that vivid vision of the Glorious Saviour which was vouchsafed to him in the night-time of that tragedy which rocked his soul to its very foun-

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dations. For then it was that Jesus gained the absolute mastery over him, as He said to his anguished servant: "Fear not! From now on you are to be my man." From that hour to this George Truett's whole being has been surrendered, devoted, consecrated to the Lord Jesus and His service.

The roots of his consecration have struck deep into his subconsciousness, as is shown by some revealing sentences written to the author by Mrs. Truett, following Dr. Truett's serious illness during May and June of 1938. Having just closed the annual revival services in his own church in April, he had gone to Longview, Texas, for a series of evangelistic services, in which many churches over a wide area of East Texas were to participate. He preached for only a day or two when he was seized by a virulent attack of influenza. He tried to keep right on. He spoke at least twice with a high fever. Back at his hotel he became delirious. He was rushed by ambulance to Baylor Hospital in Dallas where he remained for a month. From the hospital, he went to his favorite health-resort at Mineral Wells, Texas, where, for another month, he made steady progress to a complete restoration of health and strength. Leaving Mineral Wells, he returned to his own pulpit for one service at which he preached to one of the largest congregations ever assembled at that church. Then away he went to Canada to fulfill long-standing engagements from Winnipeg to Vancouver, speaking once a day for about two weeks.

He had gone through the most serious illness of his life, but he had completely recovered; and he had been

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made to realize that there were limits beyond which even his iron constitution should not be driven. Perhaps his illness was providential.

Mrs. Truett wrote:

I really think he is back to normal. But I do not mean to let him take on *ever* as much as he has in the past. . . . My task has not been an easy one these past two months. It is very sweet to me, and a source of comfort to him to learn that all through his unconsciousness and delirium from fever or medicine, his subconscious mind was just as clean and Christian as his daily life has always been. As you know, I did not leave his bedside for the four weeks of his hospitalization, nor the weeks since. In his delirium he was quoting scripture, preaching, calling men to Christ or praying for them. I feel that his illness was a great revelation of the real man.

This is convincing evidence of the depths of this man's consecration! If any further evidence be needed, it may be found in a letter, never intended for publication, which he wrote to Mrs. Truett on his seventieth birthday:

May 6, 1937

MY DARLING JOSEPHINE:

The long expected day has arrived. "The days of our years are three score and ten." I have lived out the allotted span of life! Emotions too deep for words stir in my heart. More grateful than my poor words can say, am I, both to God and to humanity, for all the mercies that have been showered upon me, through all the fast-flying years! It is all of *grace, grace, God's wonderful grace!* I would this day rededicate my all to Christ, to go

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and to *say* and to *do* and to *be*, what he would have at my hands, for all the days ahead, whatever they may be! I do fervently hope and pray that my days ahead may be far better and more useful than the days that are gone. May God mercifully grant it, for His Great Name's sake!

No other birthday that I have ever had has so deeply affected me as this one today. I have been reminded of it by letters, telegrams, flowers, telephone calls, etc. on all sides.

Though I do not deserve any of these tokens, I appreciate them more than I can say. They intensify my desire and purpose, with God's help, to strive still more faithfully to make my humble and very imperfect life a blessing to the people. And *you* will be by my side, to pray for me and to help me all along—*you* my chiefest earthly comfort and inspiration.

Forever your own

Seventy year-old, and going strong!

GEORGE.

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